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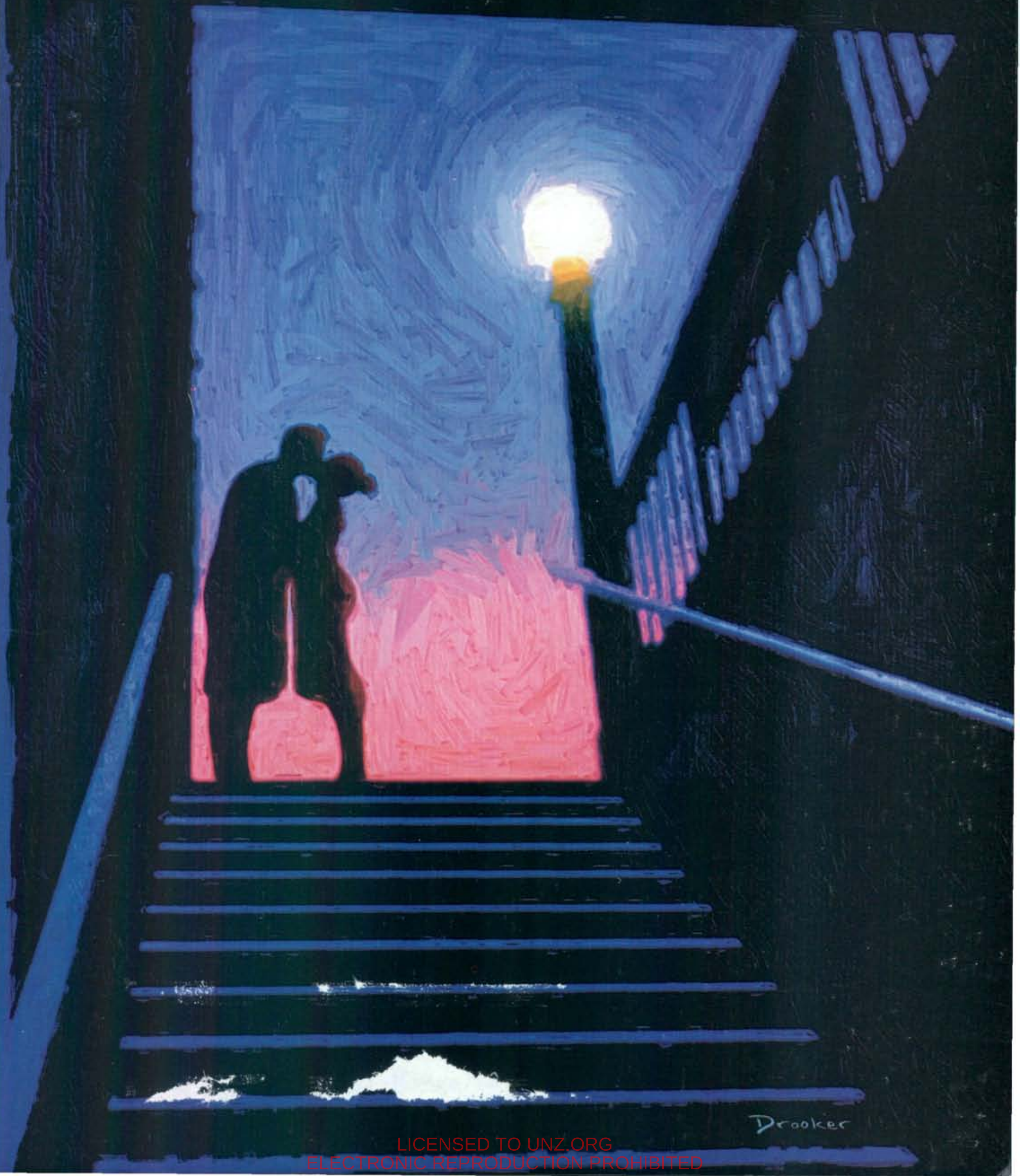
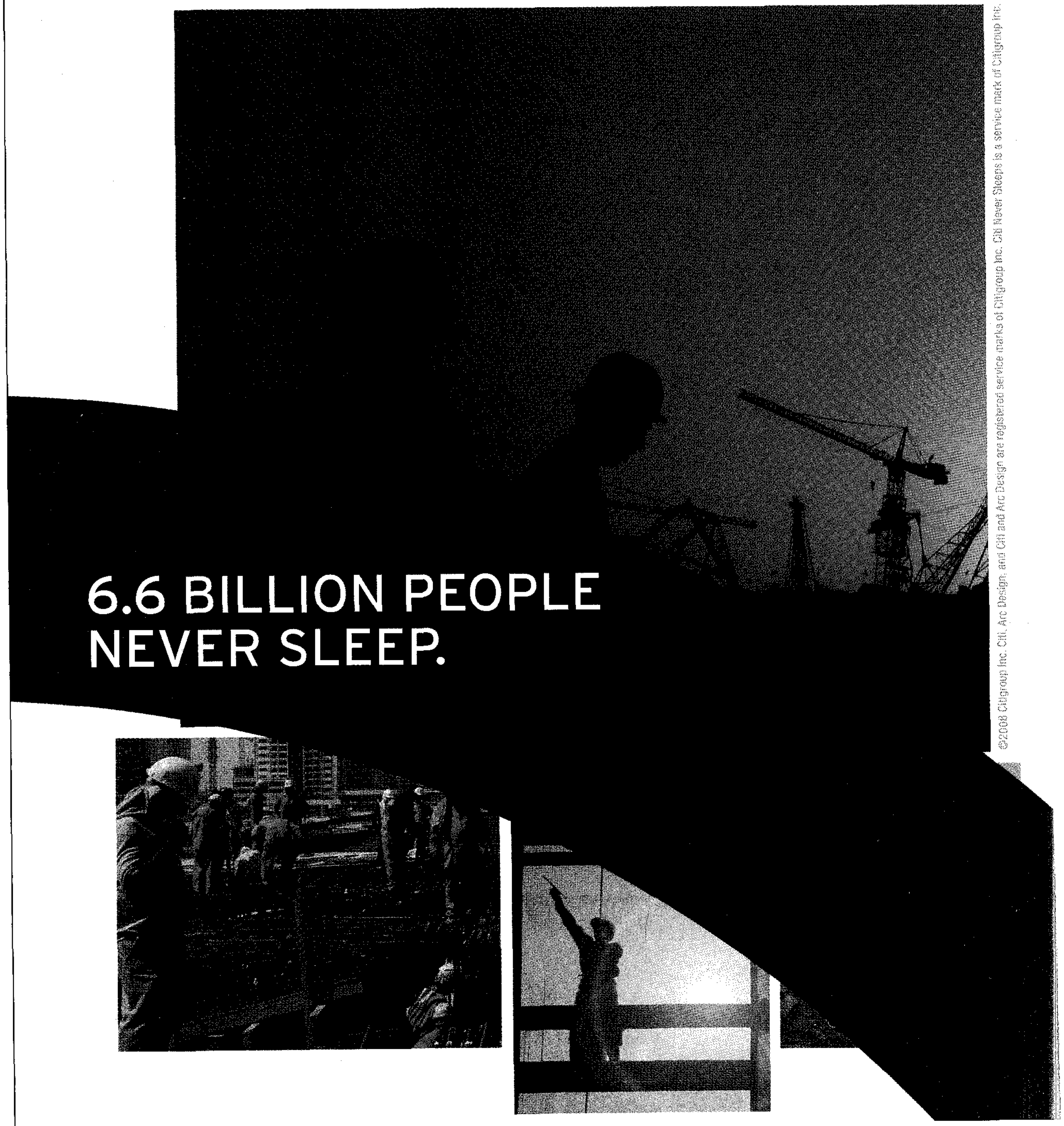
THE NEW YORKER

SEPT. 15, 2008

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Dreams. **Realities.**

The tower cranes are still. The backhoes are silent. And for a weary group of Guangzhou construction workers, the long work day has finally come to an end. >>> But, in Lyon and Dubai and Delhi, the work continues for several more hours. >>> Meanwhile, in Vancouver and São Paulo, the daily toil has only just begun. >>> The fact is, there are 6.6 billion of us spread out across the planet. And only one financial institution has the vast depth and breadth of resources to keep pace.

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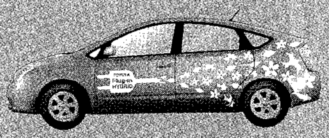

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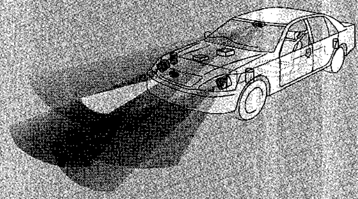

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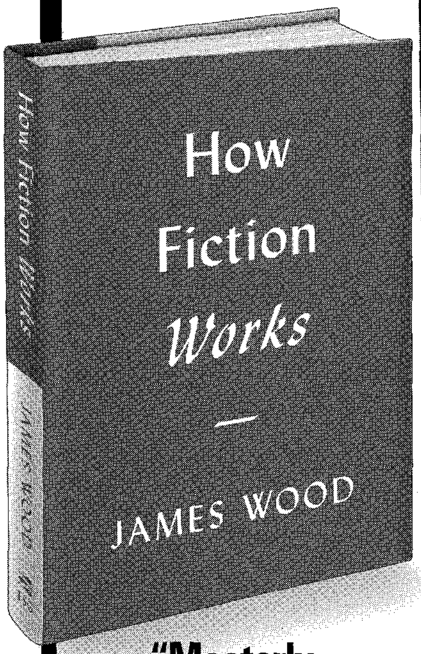

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—David Gates, *Newsweek*

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THE NEW YORKER

SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

8 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
29 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Hendrik Hertzberg on Republican rhetoric; not acting their age; a Bronx delegation; a problem for Sarah Palin; James Surowiecki on the equal-pay bill.

Peter Hessler 36 LETTER FROM BEIJING
The Home Team
What the Chinese made of the Olympics.
Paul Rudnick 43 SHOUTS & MURMURS
The Lord Bod
Jennifer Kahn 44 OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS
A Cloud of Smoke
The forensics fight over a 9/11 death.
Ariel Levy 52 THE POLITICAL SCENE
The Lonesome Trail
Cindy McCain's role.
Burkhard Bilger 62 A REPORTER AT LARGE
The Long Dig
Tunnelling to Switzerland.
Daniyal Mueenuddin 74 FICTION
"A Spoiled Man"

THE CRITICS
Nancy Franklin 84 ON TELEVISION
Watching the Conventions.
Claudia Roth Pierpont 87 A CRITIC AT LARGE
The meaning of Machiavelli.
93 BOOKS
Briefly Noted
Sasha Frere-Jones 94 POP MUSIC
Listening to laptops.
David Denby 96 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Burn After Reading," "Trouble the Water."

POEMS
L. S. Asekoff 58 "The Gate of Horn"
Harry Clifton 71 "The Eel"

COVER *"New York Moment," by Eric Drooker* DRAWINGS *Robert Mankoff, Farley Katz, Barbara Smaller, Jack Ziegler, Erik Hilgerdt, Gahan Wilson, Tom Cheney, Bruce Eric Kaplan, William Haefeli, Lee Lorenz, Edward Koren, P. C. Vey, Joe Dator, Roz Chast, Michael Rae-Grant, Charles Barsotti, John O'Brien, Leo Cullum, Emily Flake* SPOTS *Mariscal*

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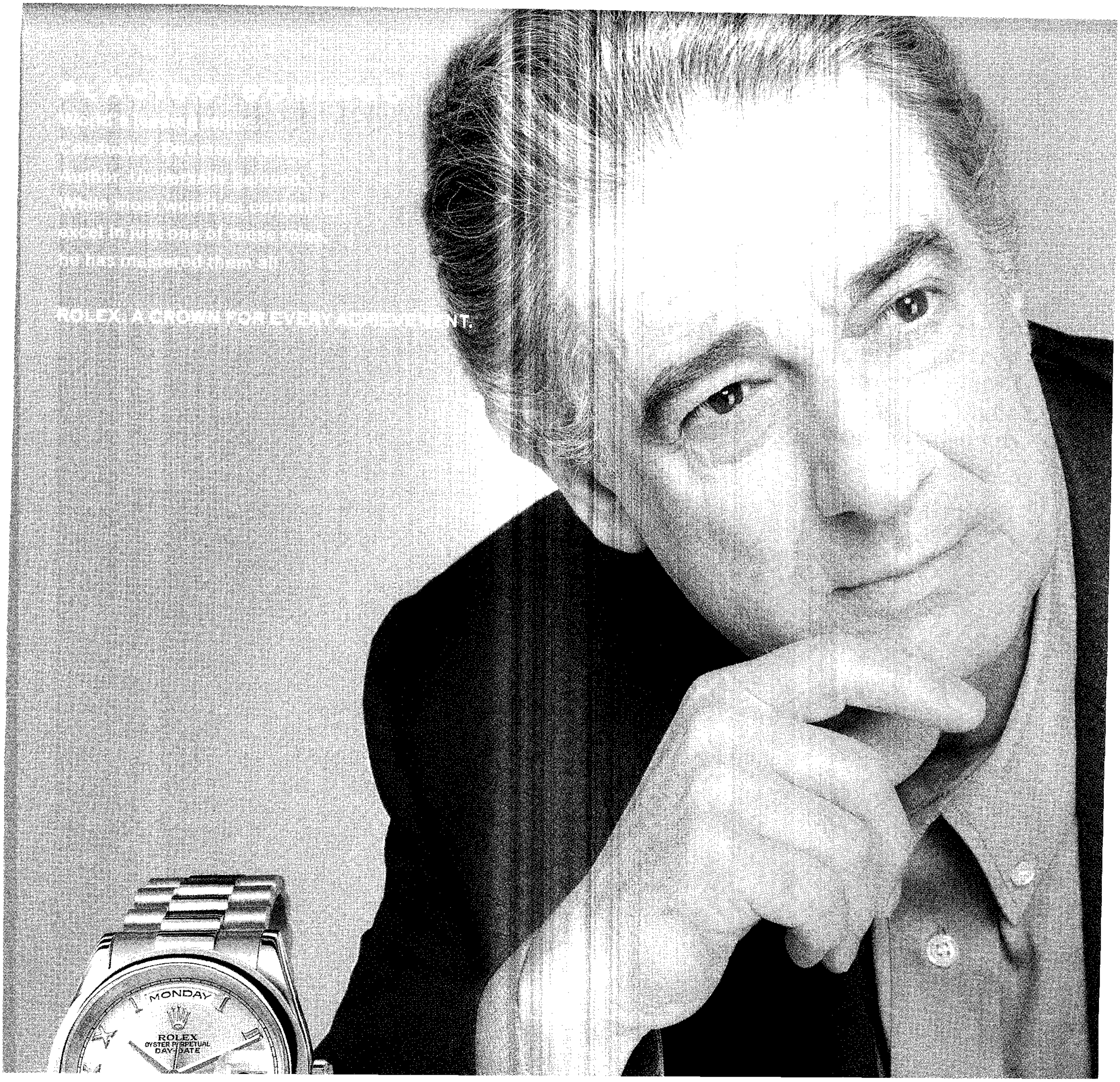
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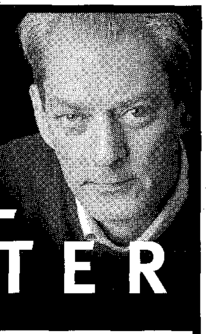

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"MAN IN THE DARK is at once haunting, thought-provoking, emotional and compellingly readable."
—*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Works beautifully... This is perhaps Auster's best book. Like Vonnegut's classic anti-war novel [*Slaughterhouse Five*], Auster's book leaves one with a depth of feeling much larger than might be expected from such a small and concise work of art."
—*San Francisco Chronicle*

"Remarkable... *Man in the Dark* possesses a grand and generous heart."
—*The Boston Globe*

"Auster's writing is forceful, graceful and pinpoint precise."
—*Chicago Sun-Times*

Author photo © Lotte Hansen

A Frances Coady Book
Henry Holt and Company
us.macmillan.com/maninthedark

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Harry Clifton (Poem, p. 71) won the 2008 *Irish Times* Poetry Now Award for his collection "Secular Eden: Paris Notebooks 1994-2004." He teaches at University College Dublin.

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THIS WEEK ON NEWYORKER.COM

Think Tank, a new blog by *Steve Coll*. / *Hendrik Hertzberg*, *Ryan Lizza*, and *Peter Boyer* on the Campaign Trail podcast. / Audio: *Ariel Levy* on Cindy McCain and the women of the 2008 election. / Complete election coverage at newyorker.com/go/campaigntrail. / Ask the Author: *James Surowiecki* takes questions about equal pay. / From the archives: Talk of the Town stories from September 11th. / Blogs by *Hendrik Hertzberg*, *George Packer*, and *Sasha Frere-Jones*, plus the Book Bench and the Cartoon Lounge. / Animated cartoons, the caption contest, and a list of *New Yorker* events.

THE MAIL

COMMEMORATING BRUNO

Joan Acocella, in her review of Ingrid Rowland's "Giordano Bruno: Philosopher/Heretic," mentions the memorial statue to Bruno in Rome's Campo de' Fiori, where the Inquisition burned him at the stake for heresy in 1600 (Books, August 25th). As a young man in Dublin, James Joyce reviewed J. Lewis McIntyre's "Giordano Bruno," expressing regret that there were few books on Bruno's life and work available in English. So Joyce created his own memorial to Bruno, with "Finnegans Wake," in which he pays tribute to the philosopher's name ("brulobrulo"), death ("fried-at-belief-stakes"), and dualistic philosophy ("equals of opposites, evolved by a onesame power of nature or of spirit . . . and polarised for reunion by the symphysis of their antipathies"). Joyce would be pleased to see this new work in English on a philosopher he so admired.

Bill Cliett
Gainesville, Fla.

AN EXISTENTIALIST ADULTHOOD

David Grann, in his fascinating account of Frédéric Bourdin, remarks that Bourdin had written the following in his notebook: "When you fight monsters, be careful that in the process you do not become one" ("The Chameleon," August 11th & 18th). But this was not the real Bourdin, either; Friedrich Nietzsche expressed that very idea in 1886 in "Beyond Good and Evil." Another aphorism from that book is particularly rich to consider in the light of Bourdin's escapades: "Human maturity: this means rediscovering the seriousness we had toward play when we were children." If Bourdin did indeed read Nietzsche, this could suggest that he tried to achieve maturity by finding his "inner child" again and again. On the other hand, this passage might reveal how Bourdin struggled to accept the unsettling reality that much of adult life is uncannily similar to the seriousness one felt as a child at play. Grann's article leaves open the possibility that Bourdin, in being in a committed partnership and having his own child, has at last found that maturity is every bit as serious as playing a role.

Christopher Schaberg
Davis, Calif.

MASTER AS PASTOR

Judith Thurman remains so attached to Richard B. Sewall's biography of Emily Dickinson, published in the nineteen-seventies, that she recycles his misjudgments, slots all later work as half cracked, and ignores R. W. Franklin's variorum edition of 1998 (Books, August 4th). A fundamental flaw in Sewall's treatment is that, rather than trace the complex skein of Dickinson's development, he examined separately her various relationships. His conviction that Master must have been Samuel Bowles, the magnetic newspaper editor, is refuted in my biography, "My Wars Are Laid Away in Books," which shows (from sources not known to Sewall) that the poet became acquainted with Bowles after composing the first of three surviving letter drafts to Master. There are many wild claims about the identity of this mysterious figure, but only two viable candidates: the mordantly brilliant Reverend Charles Wadsworth (mentioned by Thurman) and the Reverend George Henry Gould. Sewall, supposing Master to be an editor, devised a fictional Dickinson who hoped to publish and was lastingly hurt when the man she loved failed to recognize her genius. Seeing that Master was a minister gets us much closer to the poet's inner life: her conversion of an early and quite fanatical obsession with Heaven into a lyric exploration of the tragic human desire for love, timelessness, and the absolute.

Alfred Habegger
Lost Prairie, Ore.

•

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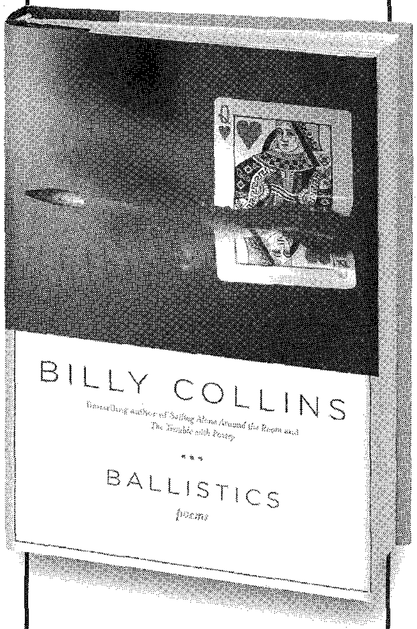
FROM
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR
AND TWO-TERM
U.S. POET LAUREATE

BILLY
COLLINS



BALLISTICS

In his stunning new collection of poetry, Billy Collins reflects on everything from the effects of love, to his solitude, to the essence of an ordinary afternoon:

All I do these drawn-out days
is sit in my kitchen at Pheasant
Ridge
where there are no pheasants
to be seen
and, last time I looked, no ridge.

"[A] poet of plentitude, irony, and Augustan grace."
—The New Yorker

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Orchestra Baobab, at the River to River Festival. Photograph by Yola Monakhov.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
14	15	16	10	11	12	13

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
OUTER BOROUGH

Elizabeth Marvel ("Top Girls") and Norbert Leo Butz ("Is He Dead?") star in "Fifty Words," a drama by Michael Weller about a couple living in brownstone Brooklyn. Austin Pendleton directs the show at the Lucille Lortel. (See page 11.)

NIGHT LIFE
SOLID GOLD

In 1958, Fender introduced the Jazzmaster, a sleek solid-body electric guitar designed for high-end jazz musicians. They didn't like it much, but it became popular with surf rockers in the sixties and then later with the likes of Elvis Costello, Television's Tom Verlaine, the Cure's Robert Smith, and Sonic Youth's Lee Ranaldo. A few of its fans, including Verlaine, Ranaldo, and Dinosaur, Jr.,'s J Mascis, mark the instrument's anniversary with a show at the Knitting Factory. (See page 13.)

ART
DISHFUL THINKING

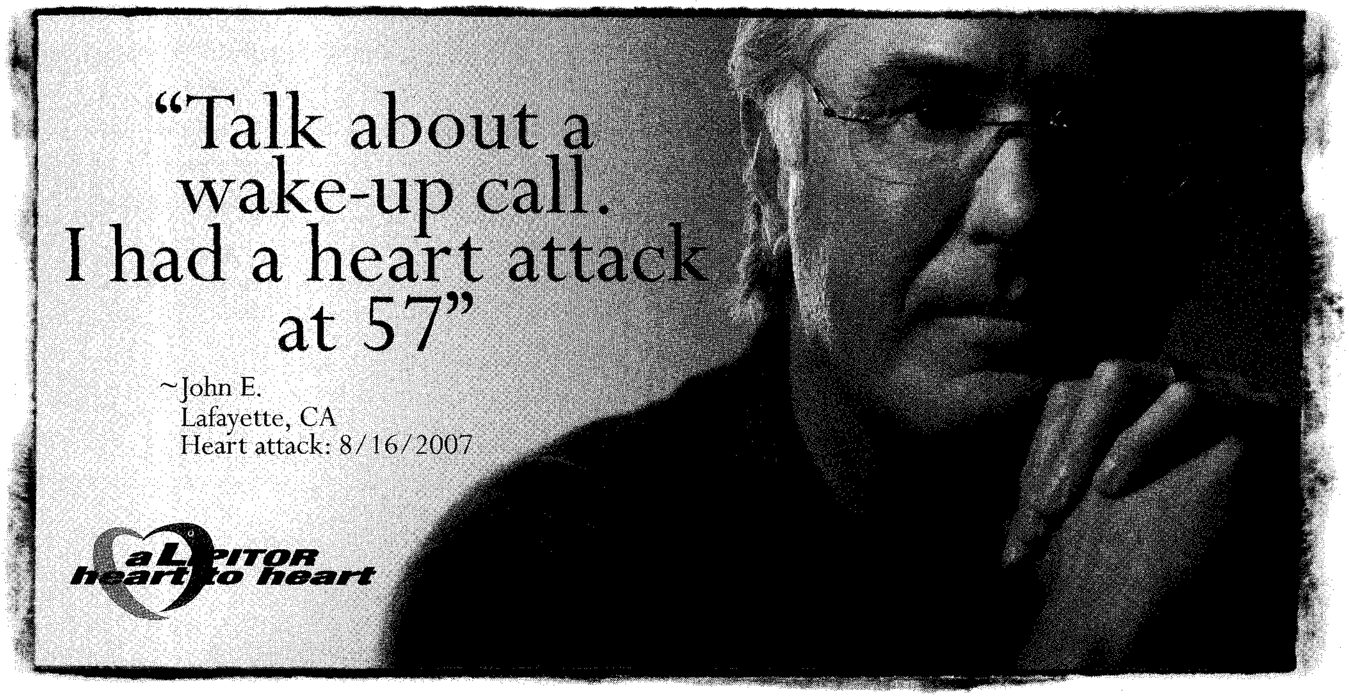
The nineteenth century was the golden age of china, produced in the factories of Berlin, Sèvres, and Vienna. Among the treasures in "Royal Porcelain from the Twinight Collection, 1800-1850," at the Met, are vases embellished with cameos, and a goblet and saucer commemorating Captain Cook's Atlantic encounter with icebergs. (See page 14.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
PIANO MEN

Robert Spano—usually busy as a conductor, but always an advocate for modern music—joins Pedja Muzijevic for a duo-piano concert in the "Movado Hour" series that features works by Reich, Crumb, and Satie. (See page 19.)

MOVIES
LEAN PICKINGS

To celebrate the centennial year of the director David Lean, the British Film Institute oversaw the restoration of ten of his classic films, including "Brief Encounter," from 1945, and "Great Expectations," from the following year. Film Forum will devote a week to these ten, followed by a week of six more, centered on such epics as "Lawrence of Arabia." (See page 23.)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~John E.
Lafayette, CA
Heart attack: 8/16/2007
a LIPITOR heart to heart

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION: LIPITOR is a prescription drug. It is used in patients with multiple risk factors for heart disease such as family history, high blood pressure, age, low HDL ('good' cholesterol) or smoking to reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and certain kinds of heart surgeries. When diet and exercise alone are not enough, LIPITOR is used along with a low-fat diet and exercise to lower cholesterol.

LIPITOR is not for everyone. It is not for those with liver problems. And it is not for women who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant. If you take LIPITOR, tell your doctor if you feel any new muscle pain or weakness. This could be a sign of rare but serious muscle side effects. Tell your doctor about all medications you take. This may help avoid serious drug interactions. Your doctor should do blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment and may adjust your dose. The most common side effects are gas, constipation, stomach pain and heartburn. They tend to be mild and often go away.

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Please see additional important information on next page.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

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LOWERING YOUR HIGH CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol is more than just a number, it's a risk factor that should not be ignored. If your doctor said you have high cholesterol, you may be at an increased risk for heart attack. But the good news is, you can take steps to lower your cholesterol.

With the help of your doctor and a cholesterol-lowering medicine like LIPITOR, along with diet and exercise, you could be on your way to lowering your cholesterol.

Ready to start eating right and exercising more? Talk to your doctor and visit the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org.

WHO IS LIPITOR FOR?

Who can take LIPITOR:

- People who cannot lower their cholesterol enough with diet and exercise
- Adults and children over 10

Who should NOT take LIPITOR:

- Women who are pregnant, may be pregnant, or may become pregnant. LIPITOR may harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant, stop LIPITOR and call your doctor right away.
- Women who are breast-feeding. LIPITOR can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby.
- People with liver problems
- People allergic to anything in LIPITOR

BEFORE YOU START LIPITOR

Tell your doctor:

- About all medications you take, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements
- If you have muscle aches or weakness
- If you drink more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day
- If you have diabetes or kidney problems
- If you have a thyroid problem

ABOUT LIPITOR

LIPITOR is a prescription medicine. Along with diet and exercise, it lowers "bad" cholesterol in your blood. It can also raise "good" cholesterol (HDL-C).

LIPITOR can lower the risk of heart attack or stroke in patients who have risk factors for heart disease such as:

- age, smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL-C, heart disease in the family, *or*
- diabetes with risk factor such as eye problems, kidney problems, smoking, or high blood pressure

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LIPITOR

Serious side effects in a small number of people:

- **Muscle problems** that can lead to kidney problems, including kidney failure. Your chance for muscle problems is higher if you take certain other medicines with LIPITOR.
- **Liver problems**. Your doctor may do blood tests to check your liver before you start LIPITOR and while you are taking it.

Symptoms of muscle or liver problems include:

- Unexplained muscle weakness or pain, especially if you have a fever or feel very tired
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain
- Brown or dark-colored urine
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow

If you have these symptoms, call your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of LIPITOR are:

- Headache
- Diarrhea, gas
- Rash
- Constipation
- Upset stomach and stomach pain
- Muscle and joint pain

Side effects are usually mild and may go away by themselves. Fewer than 3 people out of 100 stopped taking LIPITOR because of side effects.

HOW TO TAKE LIPITOR

Do:

- Take LIPITOR as prescribed by your doctor.
- Try to eat heart-healthy foods while you take LIPITOR.
- Take LIPITOR at any time of day, with or without food.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. But if it has been more than 12 hours since your missed dose, wait. Take the next dose at your regular time.

Don't:

- Do not change or stop your dose before talking to your doctor.
- Do not start new medicines before talking to your doctor.
- Do not give your LIPITOR to other people. It may harm them even if your problems are the same.
- Do not break the tablet.

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- Talk to your pharmacist.
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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ANGER/NATION
The Kitchen premières a new play by Radiohole, about the nineteenth-century temperance leader Carry A. Nation. Opens Sept. 11. (512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793.)

BEAST
New York Theatre Workshop opens its season with a new comedy by Michael Weller, about two Iraq-war veterans who journey to Crawford, Texas, to confront the President. Jo Bonney directs. In previews. Opens Sept. 15. (79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL
At the Abingdon, a play by Robert Brustein, which explores the possibility that Shakespeare borrowed from his contemporaries Christopher Marlowe and the Earl of Southampton. Daniela Varon directs. Previews begin Sept. 13. (312 W. 36th St. 212-868-4444.)

ENTER LAUGHING
Joseph Stein wrote the book and Stan Daniels wrote the music and lyrics for this musical, based on Carl Reiner's semiautobiographical novel from 1958, about an aspiring actor who has no talent. Stuart Ross directs. Opens Sept. 10. (Saint Peter's Theatre, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 212-935-5820.)

EQUUS
Daniel Radcliffe, Richard Griffiths, and Kate Mulgrew star in Peter Shaffer's 1974 drama, about a disturbed teen-ager and his psychiatrist. Thea Sharrock directs. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

FIFTY WORDS
Michael Weller wrote this play, starring Elizabeth Marvel and Norbert Leo Butz, about a crazy night in the life of a young Brooklyn family. Austin Pendleton directs the MCC Theatre production. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200.)

THE GLASS CAGE
The Mint presents the U.S. première of J. B. Priestley's drama, about a family whose youngest son brings his Native American wife and her siblings home for a visit. Lou Jacob directs. In previews. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

THE INVITATION
John Clancy directs this dark comedy, by Brian Parks, about a high-society dinner party that goes south. Opens Sept. 10. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444.)

IRENA'S VOW
Tovah Feldshuh stars in a new play by Dan Gordon, based on the true story of a woman who worked as head housekeeper for a German officer in Occupied Poland during the Second World War and went on to shelter Jewish refugees. In previews. (Baruch Performing Arts Center, E. 25th St. between Lexington Ave. and Third Ave. 212-352-3101.)

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS
Frank Langella stars in Robert Bolt's 1961 account of Sir Thomas More, who voiced his objections to King Henry VIII when he left the Catholic Church. Doug Hughes directs the Roundabout Theatre Company production. Previews begin Sept. 12. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

THE MARVELOUS WONDERETTES
Roger Bean wrote and directs this fifties-era jukebox musical, centered on four girls at their high-school prom. In previews. Opens Sept. 14. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL
The festival that spawned "[title of show]" and "Altar Boyz" returns for its fifth year. Musicals include "Idaho!" and "Bonnie & Clyde." Opens Sept. 15. (Various venues. For a full schedule, visit www.nymf.org.)

A NUMBER
The Clockwork Theatre presents a drama by Caryl Churchill, in which a man who has cloned his child must face the results. In previews. Opens Sept. 12. (Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

THE SEAGULL
Kristin Scott Thomas, Peter Sarsgaard, Mackenzie Crook (from the British version of "The Office"), and Zoe Kazan star in Chekhov's play, in a translation by Christopher Hampton. Ian Rickson directs the Royal Court Theatre production. Previews begin Sept. 16. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

TABOOS
Carl Djerassi wrote this drama, about two couples—one a lesbian couple, the other fundamentalist Christians—trying to have a child. Melissa Maxwell directs. In previews. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-691-1555.)

A TALE OF TWO CITIES
Jill Santoriello wrote the book, music, and lyrics for this musical adaptation of the Dickens novel. Warren Carlyle directs and choreographs. In previews. (Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE TEMPEST
Mandy Patinkin stars in the Shakespeare romance at Classic Stage Company. Brian Kulick directs. In previews. (136 E. 13th St. 212-352-3101.)

13, A NEW MUSICAL
Jason Robert Brown ("Parade") wrote the music and lyrics and Dan Elish and Robert Horn wrote the book for this musical, about a New York City teen-ager who is forced to move to Indiana with his newly divorced mother. Jeremy Sams directs. Previews begin Sept. 16. (Bernard B. Jacobs, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THREE CHANGES
Playwrights Horizons kicks off its season with the world première of a play by Nicky Silver, about an Upper West Side couple who get a visit from the husband's Hollywood-based brother. Wilson Milam ("The Lieutenant of Inishmore") directs. Starring Aya Cash, Scott Cohen, Dylan McDermott, Brian J. Smith, and Maura Tierney. In previews. Opens Sept. 16. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

TO BE OR NOT TO BE
Nick Whitby wrote this play, based on the film of the same name, a black comedy set in Warsaw in 1939, about a theatre troupe that becomes involved in spy games during the war. Casey Nicholaw directs. The Manhattan Theatre Club production stars David Rasche, Peter Maloney, and Jan Maxwell. Previews begin Sept. 13. (Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

WHAT'S THAT SMELL:
THE MUSIC OF JACOB STERLING
The world première of a comedy written and performed by David Pittu ("Is He Dead?"), a satire about a fictional musical-theatre composer, with music by Randy Redd. Opens Sept. 10. (Atlantic Stage 2, at 330 W. 16th St. 212-279-4200.)

WIG OUT!
Erik King stars in Tarell Alvin McCraney's new play, in which two drag-queen houses duke it out. In previews. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

NOW PLAYING

CELEBRITY AUTOBIOGRAPHY:
IN THEIR OWN WORDS
The cabaret featuring actors reading the written works of celebrities returns to the Triad. (158 W. 72nd St. 212-868-4444.)

FELA!
The Nigerian musician and political firebrand Fela Kuti was a figure of heroic stature. In the new musical about him, Sahr Ngaujah, in the title role, convincingly conveys his massive charm, biting wit, and physical grace. The Brooklyn Afro-beat band Antibalas re-creates the man's music in both letter and dare-you-to-sit-still spirit. Yet as director and co-writer, Bill T. Jones, a choreographer with deep roots in avant-garde dance, shows an ambivalence toward narrative that leaves the show in an uncomfortable middle ground. The story that gets started, involving one fateful night in 1977 in Kuti's Lagos club, is abandoned for a review of the

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Joseph Farris, captioned ink drawing, 1984.
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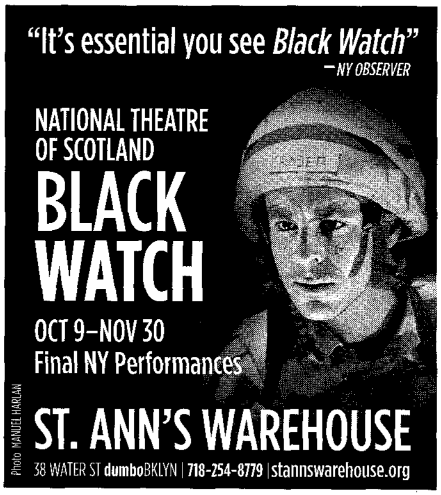
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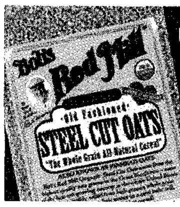

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Look for the complete Festival guide in this issue of *The New Yorker.*

Tickets are available online on Friday, September 12th, at 12 noon E.T.

To sign up for official Festival Wire e-mails, visit **festival.newyorker.com**.

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subject's musical and political development that's almost entirely devoid of dramatic tension or momentum. It's a lecture-demonstration you can dance to—in fact, are implored to dance to: the audience-participation component includes pelvic thrusts. (37 Arts, 450 W. 37th St. 212-560-8912.)

FRINGENYC ENCORE SERIES
Select Fringe Festival favorites, in repertory at SoHo Playhouse (15 Vandam St.) and at Barrow Street Theatre (27 Barrow St.). (212-691-1555. Through Sept. 16.)

JOHNNY ON A SPOT
The Peccadillo Theatre Company, now the resident company at Theatre at St. Clement's, presents a political satire by Charles MacArthur, about a Senate candidate who dies in a brothel and the campaign manager who tries to get him elected anyway. (423 W. 46th St. 212-352-3101.)

KING OF SHADOWS
Working Theatre presents the world première of a new play by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, about a teen-age hustler and a social worker who takes him in. Connie Grappo directs. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave. 212-868-4444.)

LADY
Craig Wright's drama, about the reunion of three childhood friends with differing political views, opens the season for the Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre. Dexter Bullard ("Bug") directs. (224 Waverly Pl. 212-868-4444.)

MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH
Zombie Joe's Underground Theatre Group presents stagings of three Edgar Allan Poe stories: "Masque of the Red Death," "The Tell-Tale Heart," and "The Bells." (St. Luke's, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

NANABOZHO
Ralph Lee's Mettawee River Theatre Company stages a puppet play that presents the Winnebago tribe's story of creation. (The outdoor garden of St. John the Divine, 111th St. at Amsterdam Ave. 212-929-4777. Through Sept. 14.)

THE QUARREL
David Brandes and Joseph Telushkin adapted their film for this drama, about two estranged friends, both of whom are Holocaust survivors. (DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

SOUTHERN PROMISES
In Thomas Bradshaw's drama, a dead plantation owner's wish that his slaves be freed is challenged by his wife. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-352-3101.)

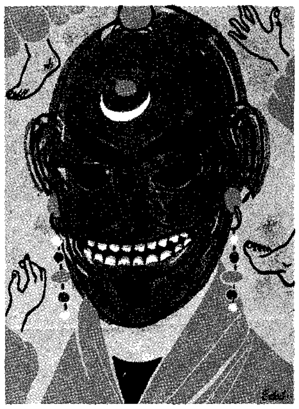
Also Playing

ABSINTHE: Spiegeltent, South Street Seaport, Pier 17. 212-279-4200. **ARIAS WITH A TWIST:** HERE Arts Center, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101. **AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **AVENUE Q:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **BOEING-BOEING:** Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **CHICAGO:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **DÉSIR:** Spiegeltent, South Street Seaport, Pier 17. 212-279-4200. **THE FIRST BREEZE OF SUMMER:** Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. **GYPSY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **HAIR: THE AMERICAN TRIBAL LOVE ROCK MUSICAL:** Delacorte Theatre, Central Park, near W. 81st St. 212-539-8750. Through Sept. 14. **HAIRSPRAY:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100. **IN THE HEIGHTS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4100. **THE LION KING:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4747. **THE LITTLE MERMAID:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747. **MAMMA MIA!:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-239-6200. **MARY POPPINS:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4747. **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **SOUTH PACIFIC:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **THE 39 STEPS:**

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
DEMON DANCES

All traditional dance suffers by being seen out of context. The Bhutanese *cham*, or demon-subjugation dances, date back to the eighth century, when Tantric Buddhism spread from Tibet to Bhutan. But to view them in their native monasteries you'd have to get on a plane and go to the Himalayas. Even then, you might not see them. The form is dying out in this increasingly modern kingdom. So we should be grateful that the Rubin Museum, devoted to Himalayan art, is bringing thirteen Bhutanese monks to perform two *cham*, this week and next, in parks and plazas across the city. In "Dance of the Black Hats," the holy men, in hats that look like Dr. Seuss creations, twirl in circular patterns. In "Tungam: Dance of the Terrifying Deities," they brandish daggers to pacify demigods annoyed by the advent of Buddhism. The music is drums, gongs, and chanting; the gowns are fabulous; and, weaponry notwithstanding, the tone is quiet, meditative, yogic. To find out where the monks are appearing, see www.rmanyc.org/bhutan.

—*Joan Acocella*



Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200. **[TITLE OF SHOW]:** Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **WICKED:** Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100. **XANADU:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

NIGHT LIFE
ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

ABRONS ARTS CENTER
466 Grand St., at Pitt St. (212-598-0400)—Sept. 13: The drummer Amir Ziv's quartet **Kotkot,** which features the guitarist Marc Ribot, the percussionist Cyro Baptista (of Beat the Donkey), and the bassist Shahzad Ismaily, celebrates the release of its new album, "Alive at Tonic." Ziv first brought this crew together for a post-9/11 benefit at his downtown loft, and he once described Kotkot's mix of influences and sounds as "hellish surf-jazz."

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Sept. 10: It's hard to keep a good man down. **Tony Clifton,** the angry, heavyset lounge-singing discovery—er, creation—of the late comedian Andy Kaufman lives on. Clifton, whose heyday was in the early eighties, was part of a long line of running jokes about identity crafted by Kaufman (a performer so adept at confusing people that many of his fans are convinced that his death, in 1984, was just a prank). Clifton, for his part, has resurrected his career (currently, and perhaps originally, played by the comedian and friend of Kaufman Bob Zmuda) and is touring with the Katrina-Kiss-My-Ass Orchestra, a backing band made up of displaced Gulf Coast musicians. Sept. 13: A night of hip-hop with **Foxy Brown** and friends. Sept. 15: A double shot of the blues, with the singer **Shemekia Copeland** and the guitarist **Duke Robillard** (one of the founders of Roomful of Blues and a former member of the Fabulous Thunderbirds) and his band.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Sept. 12: **Juliana Hatfield,** a fixture on the independent-pop scene for more than a decade, specializes in distinctly distaff songs that range from mopey to angry, and she bolsters her tales of angst and ennui with some fine guitar playing. Her new album, "How to Walk Away," features contributions from the vocalists Richard Butler, of the Psychedelic Furs, and Matthew Caws, of Nada Surf; the guitarist Jody Porter, from Fountains of Wayne; and the violinist Tracy Bonham. Sept. 13: The **Beachwood Sparks** play psychedelic country rock. Sept. 15: **Laura Marling** and **Johnny Flynn,** darlings of the British folk scene, are touring the States together.

FILLMORE NEW YORK AT IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Over the years, **GZA/Genius,** of the Wu-Tang Clan, has generated fewer headlines than some of his colleagues, yet his solo work is highly regarded, notably his second solo album, "Liquid Swords," from 1995. He's performing it here in its entirety on Sept. 12.

HIGHLINE BALLROOM
431 W. 16th St. (212-414-5994)—Sept. 11: **Paul Weller** may have started out playing punk, a genre celebrated for its disdain for tradition, but the former singer and guitarist for the Jam has always had a reverence for the past. Since dissolving that trio, in 1982, the so-called "Modfather" has defied expectations by pursuing more soulful veins of rock and pop. He led the Style Council through much of the eighties and has had a prolific solo career (playing music churlishly dubbed "Dadrock" by the British press). His most recent effort (his ninth solo album), "22 Dreams," finds the famously gruff songwriter filling out an expansive double album of lush music.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3132)—Fifty years ago, Fender first introduced the Jazzmaster electric guitar. A successor to the wildly successful Stratocaster and Telecaster models, this new guitar was intended to be a high-end instrument for jazz players. They scorned it, but it was embraced by surf-rockers. The relatively mellow instrument fell out of favor in the seventies as rock musicians looking to fill arenas went for guitars capable of greater sustain. Thanks to its low price and easy availability on the used market, the Jazzmaster became popular with New Wave artists; **Tom Verlaine** and Elvis Costello gave it fresh cachet. Verlaine, **Nels Cline, Thurston Moore, Lee Ranaldo, J Mascis,** and other fans of the solid-body instrument show what they can do with it at an anniversary concert on Sept. 12.

MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—Sept. 14: Chicago's Trouble has long been an enigmatic group. An underground success in the eighties, its members were devout Christians who excelled at the Devil's music (heavy metal) at its most lugubrious. After some tough years in the last decade, the band is back to carry on its mission.

ROSELAND
239 W. 52nd St. (212-307-7171)—Sept. 14: The **Cult** refuses to die. Still trading on the buzz of their umpteenth comeback, the band members continue to mine the fertile sounds of their storied past, excelling at both rococo-laden post-punk guitar flourish and muscularly dumb swagger. They may no longer sound entirely with it, but their tenacity is nothing if not admirable.

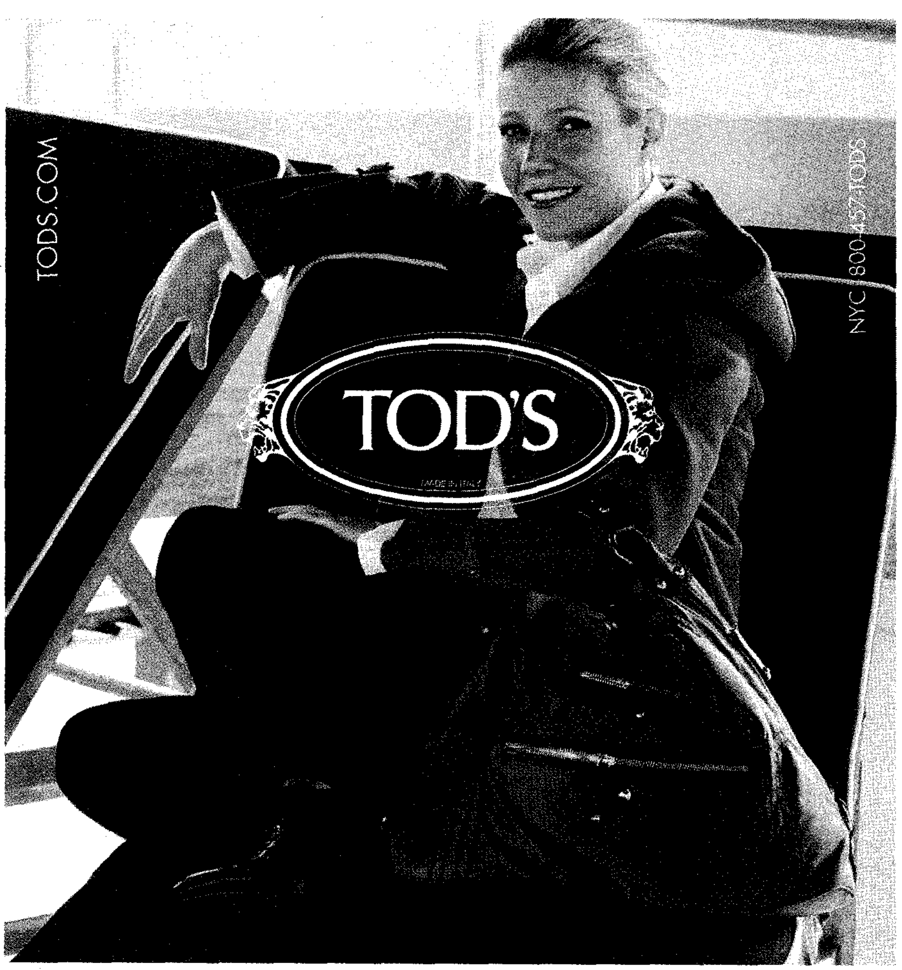
SPIEGELTENT
Pier 17, South Street Seaport (212-279-4200)—Sept. 16: The Brooklyn-based folk-pop chanteuse **Martha Wainwright,** who's touring in support of her strong new album, "I Know You're Married But I've Got Feelings Too," performs songs associated with Edith Piaf, including a gorgeous rendition of "Adieu Mon Coeur." Wainwright, who cites the emotional French warbler as one of her primary influences, is joined by the pianist Thomas Bartlett, the electric guitarist and ubiquitous multi-instrumentalist Doug Wieselman, and the bassist Brad Albetta.

TOWN HALL
123 W. 43rd St. (212-840-2824)—Sept. 15: Lila Downs, whose mother was a Mixtec singer from Mexico and whose father was an American academic, has studied opera and anthropology, and her music addresses feminism, civil rights, and the plight of Mexican immigrants. With the local group Pistolera, which is led by the guitarist and singer Sandra Lilia Velásquez and includes a propulsive accordionist named Maria Elena, a drummer named Ani Cordero (who is Velásquez's cousin, and was once in the colorful rock band Man or Astro-Man?), and one guy, the bassist Inca B. Satz. The foot-stomping band favors the fashions of the Mexican Revolution and has a winning sound that's equal parts *ranchera* and indie pop.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Half a century of performing can rob the staunchest singer of his or her vocal powers, but time has yet to catch up with **Jack Jones,** who first charted in 1962 with "Lollipops and Roses," and who may forever be linked in the pop-culture world to the theme song of "The Love Boat" (he sang the original version). From Sept. 9 to Sept. 20, he takes over the Oak Room to celebrate fifty years in the business, still flaunting the swagger that animated his 1964 hit "Wives and Lovers."

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Sept. 10-13: The **Heath Brothers.** The bassist Percy Heath may



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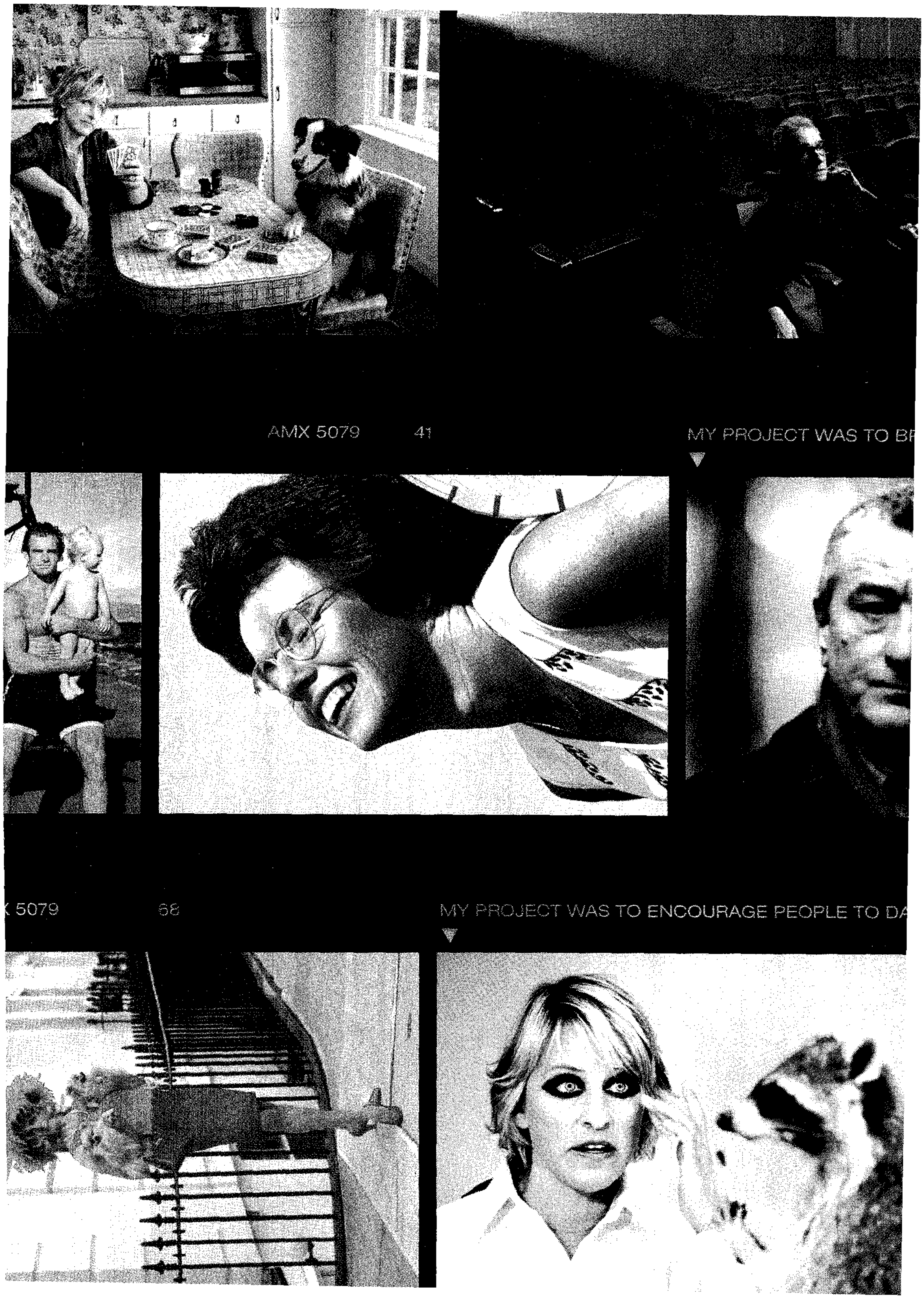
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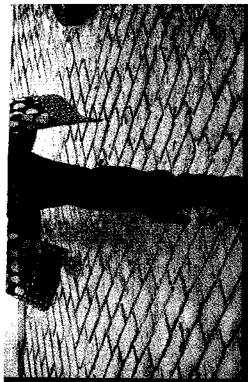

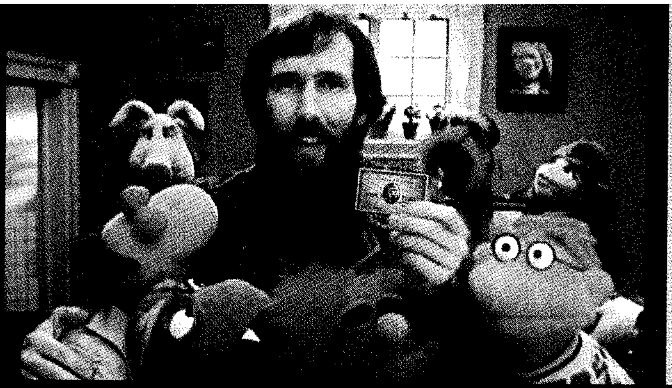

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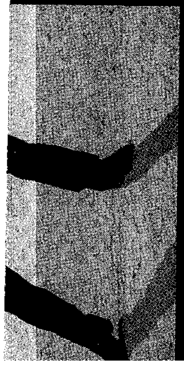

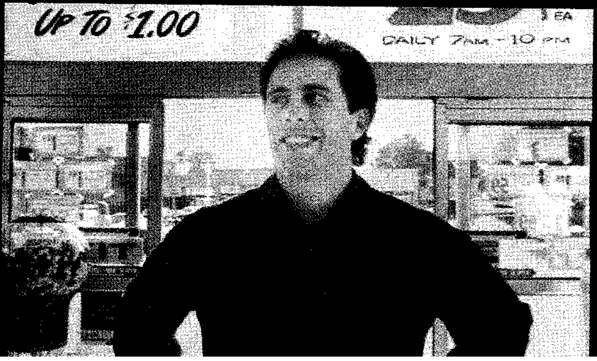

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Mikhael Subotzky's "The Mallies Household," in "New Photography 2008," at MOMA.

be gone, but his masterly siblings, the saxophonist Jimmy and the drummer Albert, soldier on.

CAFÉ CARLYLE
Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—Starting Sept. 9: The talented and genial guitarist and singer **John Pizzarelli** opens the season, joined by his wife, **Jessica Molaskey**, an engaging vocalist and witty foil.

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Sept. 9-11: The 4th Annual Diet Coke Women in Jazz Festival kicks off with the piano virtuoso **Geri Allen,** backed by the blue-chip rhythm team of the bassist **Ray Drummond** and the drummer **Victor Lewis.** The festival continues Sept. 12-14 with **Sherrie Maricle** and the Diva Jazz Orchestra, who will be joined by the singer **Marlena Shaw.**

FEINSTEIN'S AT LOEWS REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Sept. 9-20: **Ashford & Simpson.** Great songwriters don't always make great performers, but Nicholas Ashford and Valerie Simpson do. When the hit-making duo is in full swing, they can convert this tony supper club into a downtown annex of the Apollo.

FESTIVAL OF NEW TRUMPET MUSIC
The trumpeter **Dave Douglas,** a founder and musical director of this annual event, which is now in its sixth year, has transformed FONT (as it is also known) from a small esoteric gathering into a grand highlight of the musical season. This year, **Taylor Ho Bynum** and **Jeremy Pelt,** along with Douglas, have put together a strong program. It kicks off on Sept. 13 with Douglas, **Pheeroan akLeef, John Zorn,** and others in a benefit concert honoring **Wadada Leo Smith,** a leading force as a multi-instrumentalist, composer, improviser, and educator in experimental, free jazz, and world music for decades. Other first-week performers include **Eddie Allen, Ralph Alessi, Mark Isham,** Pelt, and Douglas. For more information, visit www.fontmusic.org. Through Sept. 28.)

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Sept. 10-11: The young pianist **Aaron Parks** comes with solid credentials as former sideman for Terence Blanchard and Kurt Rosenwinkle, and a début recording, "Invisible Cinema," that's garnering attention. Sept. 12-14: The guitarist and singer **James (Blood) Ulmer** has reinvented himself as a postmodern bluesman with his Memphis Blood Blues Band, which includes the guitarist **Vernon Reid.**

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000, ext. 344)—Sept. 12: The **Charles Davis** quartet. With the saxophonist Davis at the helm, and the pianist **Tardo Hammer** and drummer **Jimmy Wormworth** on board, this quartet delivers idiomatic bebop.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Sept. 9-14: The atypical drums-saxophone-guitar configuration of the **Paul Motian, Joe Lovano,** and **Bill Frisell** trio hasn't hindered its ascent as one of the premier small groups of jazz. This trio can shift from raucous to poetic during the course of a set. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"J. M. W. Turner."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632-1717)."** Through Jan. 4. ♦ **"Art of the Royal Court: Treasures in Pietre Dure from the Palaces of Europe."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Royal Porcelain from the Twinight Collection: 1800-1850."** Opens Sept. 16. ♦ **"Jeff Koons on the Roof."** Through Oct. 26. ♦ **"Early Buddhist Manuscript Painting: The Palm-Leaf Tradition."** Through March 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Dalí: Painting and Film."** Through Sept. 15. ♦ **"Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling."** Through Oct. 20. ♦ **"Focus: Picasso Sculpture."** Through Nov. 3. ♦ Exhaustive yet concise, **"Kirchner and the Berlin Street"** chronicles the interlude between 1913 and 1915, when the German painter, inspired by the hustle (and the bustles) of his adopted home town, made eight big oils, some thirty drawings, and numerous prints and studies. (Touch-screen monitors allow visitors to virtually page through his sketchbooks.) Streetwalkers were an obsession, and Kirchner built their bodies with slashing downstrokes, stuttering hatch marks, and searing color. Garments radiate acid green; hectic orange limns facial features; violence and excitement push graphic control to the edge. Through Nov. 10. ♦ **"New Photography 2008: Josephine Meckseper and Mikhael Subotzky."** Opens Sept. 10. ♦ **"Looking at Music."** Through Dec. 31. ♦ In the Renaissance, collectors displayed natural oddments—homunculus-shaped corals, narwhal tusks fobbed off as unicorn horns—in cabinets known as *Wunderkammern.* **"Wunder-kammer: A Century of Curiosities"** presents some hundred and thirty works from the museum's collection, including Robert Gober's little wax shoe sprouting hair, Odilon Redon's lithograph of an egg with a surprised-looking face, and Nicolas Lampert's digital prints of insects grafted onto machines. These hybrids, however, owe more to the Surrealism of Hans Bellmer, James Ensor, Max Ernst, and Dorothea Tanning (all represented here) than to the premodern feeling of wonder. Through Nov. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Louise Bourgeois."** Through Sept. 28. ♦ **"Imageless: The Scientific Study and Experimental Treatment of an Ad Reinhardt Black Painting."** Through Sept. 14. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 7:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—**"Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Paul McCarthy: Central Symmetrical Rotation Movement—Three Installations, Two Films."** Through Oct. 12. ♦ **"Polaroids: Mapplethorpe."** Through Sept. 14. ♦ **"Progress,"** an exhibition drawn from the museum's collection, opens with works by such utopian-minded modernists as Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, Frederick Kiesler, and Naum Gabo, as well as an epic red canvas by Barnett Newman, optimistically titled "Day One." But ideals of progress take a dive in the bleak postindustrial landscapes portrayed in a pair of Ed Ruscha paintings and the figurines of nude sunbathers by Robert Graham. By the time viewers reach Paul Sietsema's doll-house-size model of Clement Greenberg's living room, tastefully appointed with paintings by artists whom the critic championed—Newman, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski—the notion of the advancement of humanity through art looks highly suspect. Through Nov. 30. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Ghada Amer: Love Has No End."** Through Oct. 19. ♦ **"Japonisme in American Graphic Art, 1880-1920."** Through Oct. 12. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—**"The Horse."** Through Jan. 4. ♦ Some sixty creatures from five continents coil, crouch, slither, and fix the enthralled human with their unblinking stares in **"Lizards and Snakes: Alive!"** Through Jan. 5. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"House Proud: Nineteenth-Century Watercolor Interiors from the Thaw Collection."** Through Jan. 25. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, 10 to 5, Fridays, 10 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, noon to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM
225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—**"Liszt in Paris: Enduring Encounters."** Through Nov. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM
235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—**"After Nature."** Through Sept. 21. ♦ **"Altoids Award: Ei Arakawa, Lauren Kelley, Michael Patterson-Carver, and Michael Stickrod."** Judging by this exhibition of work by young artists, this year slick and glossy are out. Patterson-Carver's faux-naïve drawings of demonstrators render social protest as a strangely quixotic affair. Arakawa's scrappy installation, in which swatches of fabric are printed with dance-related texts (Isadora Duncan's letter to a newspaper editor, an excerpt from Heinrich von Kleist's story "The Dance Museum"), looks like a stage set awaiting performers. (Which it is; the perfor-

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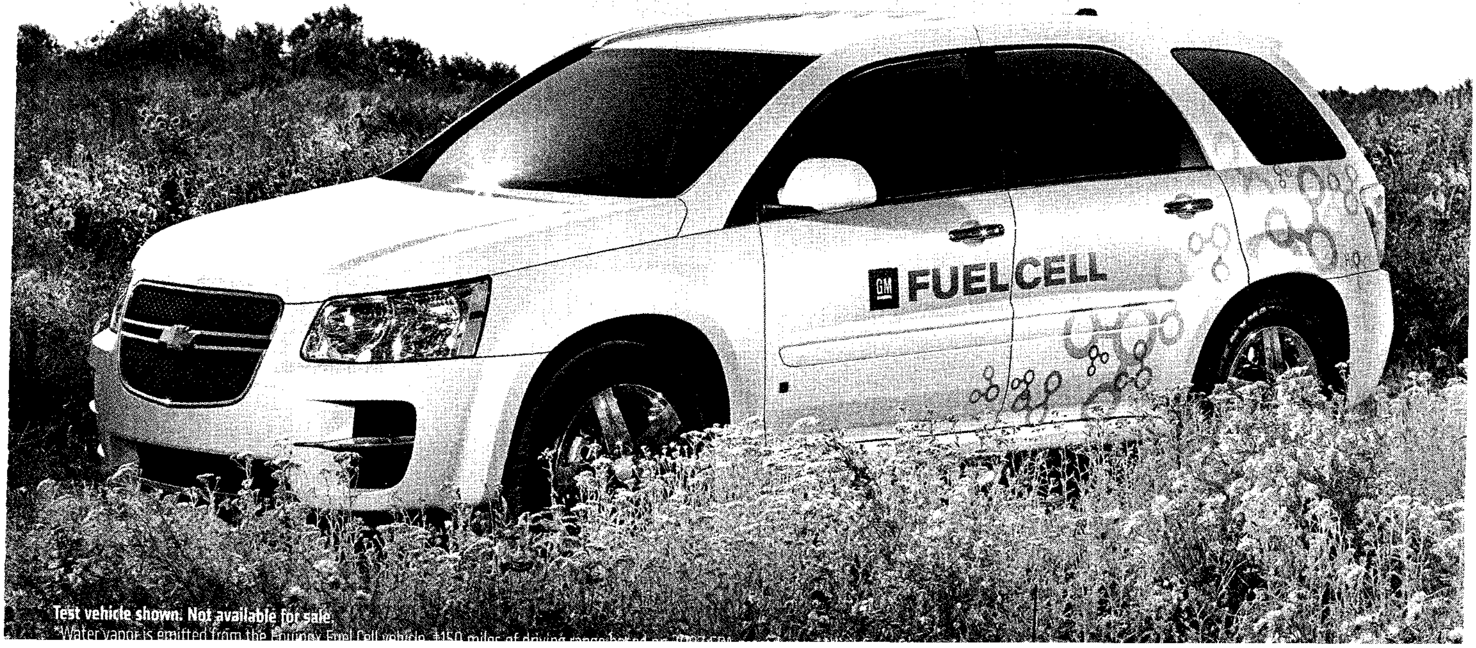

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mance will take place on Oct. 5.) The sound in Stickrod's touching video portraits of his parents vies for attention with Kelley's brassy stop-motion animations. Through Oct. 12. (Open Wednesdays and weekends, noon to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 10.)

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART
150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000)—**"Red, Black, and Gold."** Through Oct. 13. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, 11 to 5, Wednesdays, 11 to 7, Fridays, 11 to 10, and weekends, 11 to 6.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500)—**"Kehinde Wiley—The World Stage: Africa, Lagos ~ Dakar."** Through Oct. 26. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

JOSEF ALBERS
Pleasure is the subtext of this exhibition of black-and-white photographs by the artist best known for the nesting color blocks of his "Homage to the Square" paintings. (It's surely no coincidence that Hermès, which hosts this show, has just reproduced some on scarves.) Scenes of beaches, carrousel horses, and garments billowing on a clothesline are suffused with uncomplicated—but not unsophisticated—delight. Albers's photographs of women (including a pair of portraits of his wife, Anni) are as vivacious as Jacques-Henri Lartigue's, and there are echoes of Atget in his studies of shop-window mannequins. But his own Bauhaus bent is most evident in collages that combine several images and multiple viewpoints. Through Sept. 16. (691 Madison Ave., at 63rd St. 212-751-3181.)

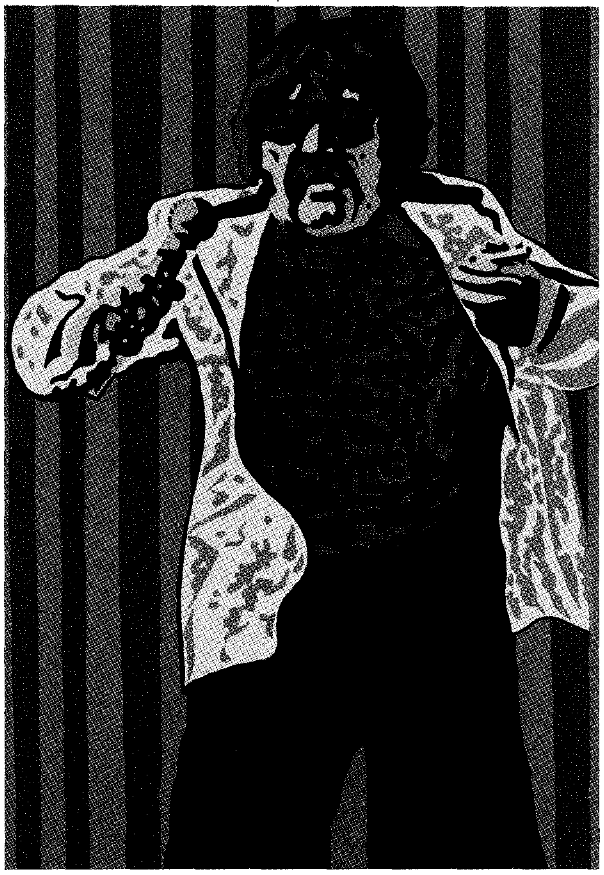
"COMPETING IDEOLOGIES: AMERICAN WORKS ON PAPER FROM THE 1930S-1940S"
Before the twentieth century, Rubenistes and Poussinistes argued about the relative value of color and line. But in the nineteen-thirties and forties, the battle shifted to figuration versus abstraction. In the former camp, the Social Realists (Ben Shahn, Raphael Soyer) portrayed political subjects, while American Scene painters focussed on landscape. (John Steuart Curry is represented here by a lyrical watercolor of Arizona). Abstract painters, meanwhile, aspired to the ranks of the European vanguard, as seen here in Burgoyne Diller's Mondrian-influenced gouache, taking cues from Cubism, Constructivism, and Surrealism. It is these artists who paved the way for the painters of the New York School. Through Sept. 12. (Wigmore, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-581-1657.)

Short List

JOHN ASHBERY / TREVOR WINKFIELD: De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-262-5050. Through Oct. 4. **CHARLES BURNS:** Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 212-861-7338. Through Oct. 12. **JOSEF KOUDELKA / JUDITH JOY ROSS:** Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999. Through Oct. 11. **JANET MALCOLM:** Bookstein, 37 W. 57th St. 212-750-0949. Through Oct. 11. **GIUSEPPE PENONE:** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160. Opens Sept. 9. **THEODORE ROSZAK / CHARLES SELIGER:** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 212-247-0082. Through Oct. 25. **"ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM: A WORLD ELSEWHERE":** Haunch of Venison, 1230 Sixth Ave., at 49th St. 212-636-2034. Opens Sept. 12.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

PHYLLIS GALEMBO
Galembo's photographs of fantastically costumed revellers in Nigeria, Benin, and Haiti might have their roots in ethnographic studies, but there's nothing academic about their presentation—or their impact. Some of her big, glossy color prints (the largest are five-foot squares) are great fashion shots, detailing outrageous mash-ups of feathers, flounces, woven fronds, and rose-colored bristles that make Comme des Garçons look tame. But the work from Haiti is dark and hellish, a black-comic vision of masked, bare-chested figures slathered with oily tar and brandishing fake weapons. Here, masquerade appears to be less celebration than exorcism, and the demons rule. Through Oct. 25. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)


Tony Clifton plays the B. B. King Blues Club & Grill.

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

JOSEF KOUDELKA
The photographs that Koudelka took during the August, 1968, week in which Soviet-led Warsaw Pact troops invaded Prague still strike sparks. Koudelka brought the righteous fury of a resistance fighter to a subject that never gets old: popular opposition to totalitarian repression. The bulk of the work in this two-gallery show is installed, unframed, at Aperture, where the walls have been painted black for maximum impact; a smaller group of vintage and new prints is at Pace/MacGill. A number of these pictures were published a year after the invasion, but attributed to an anonymous Czech photographer. Many more have never been shown before. All of the images have the jolting immediacy of eyewitness news. Koudelka's fearlessness was clearly epidemic; his pictures are proof that Prague was occupied but never cowed, never conquered. Through Oct. 30. (Aperture Foundation, 547 W. 27th St. 212-505-5555; Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 212-759-7999.)

"MICROWAVE"
Minimal means and pop-culture references guide the seventeen artists in this show of works on paper. Allyson Strafella types colons in colored ink until the paper shreds to lace; Kamrooz Aram's portraits coalesce from clouds of minute ink dots. Graham Dolphin draws directly onto the cover of the album "Double Fantasy," tattooing John and Yoko's faces with hair-thin scripts; Jacob Dyrenforth's pencil drawings painstakingly transcribe pixellated black-and-white photographs of crowds at rock shows. Renato Orara draws a gorgeous octopus in ball-point pen on the splayed pages of a book titled "Kant and the Platypus," though what octopi and platypuses have in common with a-priori knowledge is anybody's guess. Through Sept. 13. (Bienvenu, 529 W. 20th St. 212-206-7990.)

Short List

ROBERT BORDO: Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-367-7474. Through Oct. 11. **ROE ETHERIDGE:** Kreps, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849. Through Oct. 4. **MATTHEW DAY JACKSON:** Blum, 526 W. 29th St. 212-244-6055. Opens Sept. 12; Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 212-243-3335. Opens Sept. 13. **SYDNEY LICHT:** Markel, 529 W. 20th St. 212-366-5368. Through Oct. 4. **JOHN MCCRACKEN:** Zwirner, 533 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070. Opens Sept. 11. **VIK MUNIZ:** Sikkema Jenkins, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2340. Through Oct. 11. **ALIX PEARLSTEIN:** The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Through Oct. 18. **MARTHA ROSLER:** Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 534 W. 26th St. 212-744-7400. Through Oct. 11. **ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI:** Milo, 525 W. 25th St. 212-414-0370. Through Oct. 18. **TONY SMITH:** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200. Opens Sept. 12. **JOEL STERNFELD:** Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100. Through Oct. 4. **COSIMA VON BONIN:** Petzel, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9467. Through Oct. 4.

DANCE

DANSCORES BY OFELIA LORET DE MOLA
The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's "Sitelines" series comes to a close with "Available Space," in which the Mexican-born choreographer unleashes her anti-establishment opinions and conventional modern-dance vocabulary on City Hall Park. Mexican punk musicians add to the street-theatre cacophony. (Enter at Park Row and Broadway. 212-219-9401. Sept. 9-10 and Sept. 12 at 12:30 and Sept. 13-15 at 8.)

AMERICAN DANCE GUILD PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL
More than forty companies and soloists get packed into five programs, and two modern-dance eminences—Murray Louis, who will be present on Thursday, and Anna Sokolow, who died in 2000—get tributes. Peter Kyle essays Louis's challenging solo "Frail Demons," while the original cast members of his "Porcelain Dialogues," from 1974, reassemble themselves. Sokolow is represented by her academy-meets-jazz piece "Session for Six" and part of her "Lyric Suite," both pulled from a nineteen-fifties time capsule. Other participants include Pooh Kaye, Thomas/Ortiz, and Alexandra Beller. (Dance New Amsterdam, 280 Broadway, at Chambers St. Sept. 11-12 at 8, Sept. 13 at 3 and 8, and Sept. 14 at 3. For tickets, visit dnadance.org/performances.html.)

"B-GIRL CITY IN NYC"
The Bronx Museum and Full Circle Productions have organized this competition in b-girling and b-boying, commonly known as breakdancing. Contest categories embrace solo b-girl, solo b-boy, kids, and "three's company" (two girls and a guy). (1040 Grand Concourse, at 165th St. 718-681-6000. Sept. 12 at 2.)

DZUL DANCE
"The Symbol Bearer," the title of Javier Dzul's new work, could serve double duty as a label for the Mexican-born choreographer himself.

He's a kind of Mayan Martha Graham, choreographing rituals of the earth, except that he's also an aerialist who cinches up his dancers and sends them careening through space. His latest rite mines the Mayan myth of creation for its political implications. (Gerald W. Lynch Theatre, John Jay College, 899 Tenth Ave. 212-279-4200. Sept. 12-13 at 8.)

"CHAM! RITUAL DANCES OF BHUTAN"
In conjunction with the opening of its exhibit "The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan," the Rubin Museum is bringing a group of thirteen Tantric Buddhist monks from the remote monastery fortress at Trongsa, on the eastern slopes of the Himalayas. The monks will illustrate *cham*, or demon-subjugation dances, performed in elaborate dress (including masks) to the accompaniment of chanting and percussion. These free (and no doubt eye-opening) performances will take place at South Street Seaport, Columbus Park in Chinatown, and Central Park, as well as other public spaces around town. (For a full schedule, visit www.rmanyc.org/bhutan or call 212-620-5000, ext. 344. Sept. 13-21.)

"ORESTEIA"
Miller Theatre presents its most ambitious project to date: the first U.S. production of "Oresteia," the only opera composed by the Romanian-French composer Iannis Xenakis, the man who created stochastic music in the fifties, a compositional method based on mathematical models. Here, the cast includes a bass, two choruses, a thirteen-piece ensemble (playing instruments including whips and sirens), and six dancers; the text is in ancient Greek, the singers play instruments, and the dancers sing. Bringing it all together is the cerebrally spare choreographer/director Luca Veggetti, in what is sure to be a stylish staging. The projection design is by the French photographer Pascal Delcey, and Veggetti has selected a fine pickup ensemble of dancers, including performers from Armitage Gone!, the Cincinnati Ballet, and Juilliard. (Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Sept. 13 and Sept. 16-17 at 8.)

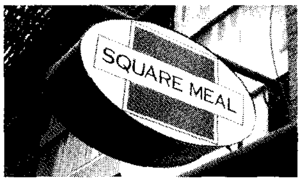
JAZZ TAP ENSEMBLE
Apart from the veteran Sam Weber, the latest iteration of the Los Angeles-based company is young, staffed with dancers born after the troupe was founded, twenty-nine years ago. The program, by contrast, is vintage. Weber applies his technical wizardry to routines by Bill Robinson and Fred Astaire, Jason Samuels Smith (in his first outing with the ensemble) uses his to incarnate John Bubbles and Gregory Hines, while the rest of the cast attempts to summon Eleanor Powell, Gene Kelly, and the early Nicholas Brothers. There's also a première—Lynn Dally's "Bahia Dreams"—but the thrust of the show is curatorial, history carried forward by new feet. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Sept. 16 at 7:30. Through Sept. 21.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

DICAPO OPERA: "THE CRUCIBLE"
Under the leadership of its director, Michael Capasso, and its artistic adviser, Tobias Picker, New York's third professional opera company has staked out an ambitious new season. It begins with an offbeat production of Robert Ward's stiff but tuneful opera (based on the Arthur Miller play about the Salem witch trials), directed by Robert Alföldi, the enfant terrible of Hungarian theatre. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 212-288-9438, ext. 10. Sept. 11 at 7:30, Sept. 12-13 at 8, and Sept. 14 at 4.)

VERTICAL PLAYER REPERTORY: "THE TALES OF HOFFMANN"
Offenbach's final opera, about the misadventures of a young, idealistic artist and social outcast, is mounted by a passel of young, idealistic artists in an appropriately scruffy setting—the Brooklyn waterfront. Judith Barnes's intrepid company returns to the Red Hook Marine Terminal (where it staged Puccini's "Il Tabarro" last year) for a production directed by Seth Baumrin and Adrienne D. Williams (and featuring Barnes as the

TABLES FOR TWO
SQUARE MEAL



HONORE BROWN

30 E. 92nd St. (212-860-9872)—For ten years, Yura's, the airy Madison Avenue muffin/latte/turkey-roll shop, has served the lionesses of Carnegie Hill as a mid-morning caffeinating hole and late-afternoon reheatable-meal hunting ground. Square Meal is the restaurant next door, in the bottom floor of a town house. Yura is Yura Mohr, the baker and chef who opened the restaurant a year ago. As for the square meal—that is what you get here. The name is perfect, conveying as it does the affectation of no affectation.

The surroundings are on message: bare floors and walls, bright light, no music, dirty-blond wood, sprigs of herbs on each table, bar shelved with cookbooks rather than booze (you'll need to bring your own, to round out your meal). The clientele can be square, too: bow ties, Belgian loafers, do-I-know-you once-overs. But the vibe, generally, is lower-key Upper East Side—genially conservative rather than garish or stuffy, more bookish than Botoxed—and so is the food, which is sophisticated but, by contemporary measure anyway, unadventurous. Although the menu changes with the seasons, Mohr's regulars have more or less forbidden her to replace certain dishes, such as the Maryland crab cake, the slow-roasted chicken, and the seared scallops with oyster mushrooms. This insistence, typical of the neighborhood, is less exasperating here, because these renditions are very fine ennoblements of the country-club meal. The ingredients are fresh and distinct, the portions right, the presentation clear. The same goes for the short-timers: a recent spate of summer soups (strawberry for a while and then corn bisque) tasted as though they'd sprung from the ground. Such agility prevails from start to finish, from cheddar-rosemary biscuit to nectarine cobbler, and without much risk to the statin set—Yura doesn't much care for red meat.

Squareness has other advantages. It can serve as an antibody against hipness. The neighborhood, short on good eating, can hardly stand to see a dependable new restaurant turn into a reservation nightmare, like Sfoglia, a couple of blocks east. If Square Meal is a little boring, this is how everyone, from the back of the house to the front, seems to like it. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays for lunch and dinner. Entrées $24-$32.)

—Nick Paumgarten

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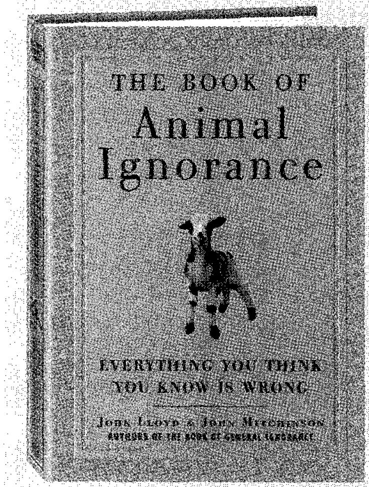
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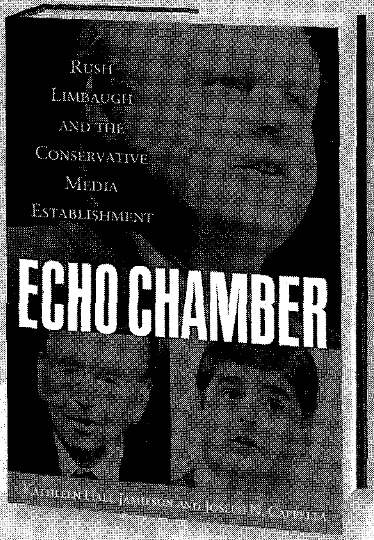
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courtesan Giulietta). (Hamilton Ave. at Van Brunt St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 12 and Sept. 14 at 8. Through Sept. 21.)

LA MAMA ETC: "CALLING"
The legendary performance space—downtown, and daring—lives up to both its strengths by presenting the first professional staging of Douglas Geers's opera, a September 11th scenario that harks back to "Our Town" in its communitarian ethos. Wickham Boyle directs the production, which is based on her book "A Mother's Essays from Ground Zero." (74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Sept. 12-13 at 8 and Sept. 14 at 2:30 and 8. Through Sept. 28.)

AMATO OPERA: "COSÌ FAN TUTTE"
Traditionalists looking for safe harbor in an adventurous, pre-Met week can visit Anthony Amato's *piccola casa* in the East Village, where classics are dispatched with the gusto of an Italian hill-town company by a mixture of professionals and amateurs. Mozart's classic battle of the sexes is the first offering of the season. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. Sept. 13 at 7:30 and Sept. 14 at 2:30.)

"ORESTEIA"
In the postwar era, mathematically complex atonality became the default technique of academic composers. The music of the composer (and architect and Greek Resistance fighter) Iannis Xenakis, however, sounded brutal because it had to: its savage beauty reveals uncomfortable truths. His opera based on the Aeschylus trilogy has never been performed in America, and Columbia University's innovative concert series brings it here to inaugurate its twentieth-anniversary season. Luca Veggetti directs a multimedia production that features the bass Wilbur Pauley, the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Young People's Chorus of New York City, and a sextet of dancers. (Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Sept. 13 and Sept. 16-17 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

"THE SEPTEMBER CONCERT"
This year's concerts in commemoration of the attacks of September 11th are limited in number but artistically promising. At St. Patrick's Cathedral, a trio of the town's better choruses—the New York Choral Society, the Young People's Chorus of New York City, and the Cathedral Choir of St. Patrick—offer a range of meditative works by such composers as Fauré (three movements from the Requiem), Krenek ("In Paradisum"), Copland, Howells, and Mendelssohn, along with several popular selections. (Fifth Ave. at 50th St. Sept. 11 at 7. No tickets required.)

"MUSICIANS FOR HARMONY"
In the seventh annual edition of this cross-cultural "Concert for Peace," first-rate performers in the Western classical tradition—including the Shanghai String Quartet and the young Brooklyn virtuosos of the Knights chamber orchestra—collaborate with notable musicians from the Middle East—including the cellist Karim Wasfi, the director of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra—for a concert offering such varied attractions as Brahms's String Quintet in G Major and the U.S. première of Mohammed Amin Ezzat's "Janan" ("Requiem"). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Sept. 11 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC
Sept. 10 at 8: Steven Beck, one of the barge's resident artists and one of the most versatile young pianists in the city, concludes his series of the complete Beethoven sonatas. The first recital of the week features such favorites as the "Waldstein" and "Tempest" Sonatas. ♦ Sept. 11 at 8: In

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
A STAR IS MADE

One of the first closeups in "Twentieth Century" is of a pin, shortly before it gets jabbed into the ass of Carole Lombard. It is the perfect introduction to Howard Hawks's sharp, shining farce of 1934, which screens on Sept. 15 as part of the Hawks retrospective at BAM. Lombard plays Lily Garland, née Mildred Plotka, who is raised from lingerie model to stage star by the theatrical producer Oscar Jaffe (John Barrymore), only to desert him for the swamp of Hollywood. The title refers not to an epoch but to the train on which they meet and clash once more (this is one of the great railroad pictures, up there with "The Palm Beach Story"), although, if there ever was a comedy that summed up a hundred years of fracases, fame-seeking, and furious postures, this is it. Barrymore is a ham playing a ham, doomed to believe in himself when everyone else has given up; as for Lombard, née Jane Peters, this was her big break, and Hawks, in his sly fashion, was her Jaffe. "We made the picture in three weeks," he said. "I just turned them loose. And she *was* a star after that."
—*Anthony Lane*

COLUMBIA PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

a special, free concert, the violinist Mark Peskanov joins with the chamber-music series' founder, the violinist Olga Bloom (among others), to offer a musical commemoration of the 9/11 tragedy. ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: Beck returns, performing the Sonata No. 6 in F Major, the Sonata No. 13 in E-Flat Major, and the mammoth Sonata No. 29 in B-Flat Major ("Hammerklavier"). ♦ Sept. 13 at 8: Four sonatas, including "The Hunt" (No. 18 in E-Flat Major) and "Les Adieux" (No. 26 in E-Flat Major). ♦ Sept. 14 at 4: Beck's grand finale offers another four, including the Sonata No. 14 in C-Sharp Minor ("Moonlight") and the valedictory Sonata No. 32 in C Minor. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

"WORDLESS MUSIC" SERIES: MUSIC BY STEVE REICH
Signal, the exciting new music group under the baton of Brad Lubman (made up of members of Alarm Will Sound, So Percussion, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center), performs two works by the minimalist master—"Music for 18 Musicians," his seminal work from 1974-76, and the more recent "You Are (Variations)," a chorus-and-ensemble score based on texts from the Torah, the Talmud, the eighteenth-century Hasidic mystic Rabbi Nachman, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. (Le Poisson Rouge, 58 Bleecker St. 800-838-3006. Sept. 13-14 at 8. Doors open one hour before the performance.)

"THE MOVADO HOUR"
The stylish downtown series—offering well-chosen one-hour concerts preceded by a wine reception—features Robert Spano, best known as the conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, joining with the series' director, Pedja Muzijevic, for a duo-piano concert that includes works by Satie ("Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear") and George Crumb ("Music for a Summer Evening"), with Steve Reich's "Clapping Music" thrown in; the percussionists Tom Sherwood and Charles Settle assist. (Baryshnikov Arts Center, 450 W. 37th St. Sept. 14 at 7. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-279-4200.)

"DA CAPO'S JOAN"
The Joan Tower seventieth-birthday celebrations continue, this time with a concert offered by a distinguished ensemble that the composer, in her former career as a pianist, helped found: the Da Capo Chamber Players. In addition to two Tower works ("Noon Dance" and "Trio Cavany"), the group also performs pieces by two other prominent American women composers, Tania León and Chen Yi ("Happy Rain on a Spring Night"). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Sept. 15 at 8.)

MOVIES OPENING

BURN AFTER READING
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Sept. 12. (In wide release.)

THE FAMILY THAT PREYS
Tyler Perry directed this comedy, about the matriarchs of two families, one rich, the other poor. Starring Alfre Woodard and Kathy Bates. Opening Sept. 12. (In wide release.)

FLOW
Irena Salina directed this documentary, about the dangers posed by the privatization of the world's water supply. Opening Sept. 12. (Angelika Film Center.)

FORGIVENESS
In this drama, directed by Udi Aloni, an Israeli soldier falls into a catatonic state after shooting a Palestinian girl. In Hebrew and English. Opening Sept. 12. (Cinema Village.)

MOVING MIDWAY
Godfrey Cheshire's documentary about his white Southern family's discovery, during the moving of its ancestral home, of African-American relatives. Opening Sept. 12. (IFC Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

RIGHTEOUS KILL
Jon Avnet directed this police drama, starring Robert De Niro and Al Pacino as detectives in pursuit of a vigilante. Opening Sept. 12. (In wide release.)

TOWELHEAD
A drama, directed by Alan Ball, about an Arab-American teen-age girl sent to live with her deeply religious father. Starring Aaron Eckhart and Summer Bishil. Opening Sept. 12. (In limited release.)

THE WOMEN
Diane English directed this remake, set in the present day, of George Cukor's 1939 drama, starring Meg Ryan, Annette Bening, Eva Mendes, and Jada Pinkett Smith. Opening Sept. 12. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

BANGKOK DANGEROUS
A remake, by the Hong Kong-born twins Danny and Oxide Pang, of their Thai hit movie of 1999. This time, it is Nicolas Cage who plays the lonely assassin. Whether Bangkok was dangerous before he got there, or whether it only became dangerous on his arrival, is never made clear; the fact remains that he has four men to murder, and only a local ne'er-do-well named Kong (Shahkrit Yamnarm) to assist him. With its dark and drained colors and its yawning gap where a sense of humor is supposed to be, the movie works hard to suggest that

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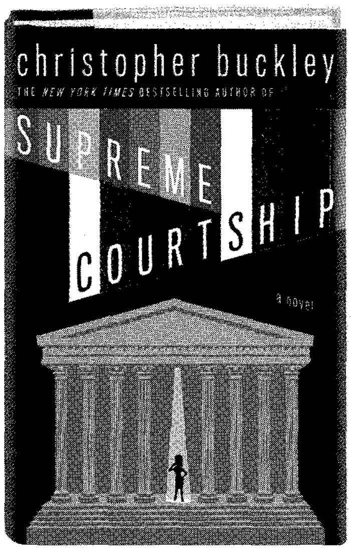

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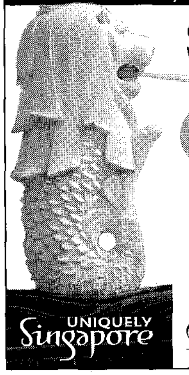

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there is both art and mystery to the calling of the hit man, but not everyone will be convinced. Beneath his lank locks, Cage looks bored and out of sorts, even during his mild flirtation with a mute pharmacist (Charlie Young); in any case, the film is scarcely in a position to flag up our hero's sentimental side, having spent so long telling us that he doesn't possess one. The same goes for his sudden attack of conscience, which causes his final task to go badly awry. Put this killer up against Edward Fox in "The Day of the Jackal," let alone Alain Delon in "Le Samouraï," and he wouldn't last two shots.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 9/8/08.) (In wide release.)

BELLE DE JOUR

The antiheroine of Luis Buñuel's brilliant 1967 black comedy is a cool upper-crust blonde named Séverine (Catherine Deneuve), a survivor of child abuse and a frigid wife who moonlights as a prostitute. Buñuel was clear on his program: "Just between us," he wrote his co-writer, Jean-Claude Carrière, "a ridiculous theme, but intriguing. A multitude of whores with terrible conflicts between the superego and the id." The ambiguities in this film are purposeful, because Buñuel's art evokes, in an extreme way, the merging of the rational and the irrational in the everyday. Deneuve is magnificent in this role; her unusual combination of surface blankness and inner steel makes Séverine the kind of woman any man can fantasize about, from her "Boy Scout" doctor husband (Jean Sorel) to a gangster with gilded teeth (Pierre Clémenti). As a well-bred wife, she wears Yves Saint Laurent suits that complete her; as a demimondaine, she wears her naked beauty proudly. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (MOMA; Sept. 11.)

CASA DE LAVA

For his second feature film, from 1994, the Portuguese director Pedro Costa constructs a politically savvy homage to Jacques Tourneur's 1943 horror film, "I Walked with a Zombie," in which postcolonial decay is invested with both metaphysical and erotic allure. Leão (Isaach De Bankolé), an immigrant laborer in Lisbon, is knocked unconscious in an industrial accident; Mariana (Inês de Medeiros), a nurse, volunteers for the medical transport that repatriates the comatose man to one of the Cape Verde islands. She busies herself at the rustic hospital that has taken him in, but she quickly comes under the spell of the volcanic island's loamy mysteries—many of which seem to revolve around the still inanimate man. Psychology takes a back seat to the overtones of history as Mariana finds herself growing increasingly involved with the family that lays claim to Leão as well as with a Portuguese émigrée, Edite (the French cult actress Edith Scob, from "Eyes Without a Face"), whose madness derives from social traumas of the local past. With a strikingly modern yet humanistic style, Costa elicits quietly declamatory performances from his remarkable cast (which joins nonactors and seasoned professionals) and creates moody, luminous tableaux to conjure an incantatory, Faulknerian earthiness. In Portuguese and Kabuverdianu.—*Richard Brody* (BAM; Sept. 13.)

ELEGY

Of all the good actors who have adorned the cycle of middle-aged-professor films in the past decade, Ben Kingsley, in this adaptation of Philip Roth's 2001 novel, "The Dying Animal," is the most formidable and convincing. Kingsley's David Kepesh is a literature teacher at Columbia and a regular virtuoso performer on television and NPR. At sixty-four, Kingsley has the grizzled barrel chest of an aging sexual warrior, a strong nose, and a shaved head. He's shrewd enough to make David not a monster but a plausibly selfish man. Nicholas Meyer's script captures some of the Rothian tone—the impatience, the sharpness, the full-bore egotism that modulates into rueful self-recognition. At the end of the semester, the professor seduces a graduate student, Consuelo (Penélope Cruz), a woman of Cuban descent, slightly formal in her manner. She wants a connection to culture; David wants a final mad immersion in lust, which arrives, not to his surprise, with its attendant idiocies of jealousy and possessiveness. Mortality and misfortune abruptly enter his life as well. With Patricia Clarkson, Dennis Hopper, and Peter Sarsgaard. Directed by Isabel Coixet.—*David Denby* (8/11 & 18/08) (In wide release.)

THE EXILES

Kent Mackenzie's miraculous independent film, made between 1958 and 1961 with scrounged film, borrowed equipment, donated services, and free labor, has, scandalously, not been released commercially until now. Mackenzie, while a U.S.C. film student, befriended Native Americans who had left their reservations and towns for Los Angeles, and he persuaded them to reënact scenes from their own lives for the camera. The resulting drama, a Pilgrim's Progress of three characters through a night of urban loneliness and dissipation, has an epic grandeur and a monumental intimacy that belies its mere seventy-two minutes. Yvonne, who is pregnant and dreams of a better life for her child, drains away the hours watching B-Westerns in an all-night grind house while her layabout boyfriend, Homer, goes out to drink and gamble. Tommy, a smooth operator, hangs out in bars and tries to pick up women but likens his life to "doing time on the outside." Mackenzie films the minutely incremental action (or, more often, inaction) in strikingly textured and composed images (the night photography alone would make the film immortal), balancing them with the characters' revealing, poignant voice-over monologues. Few directors in the history of cinema have so skillfully and deeply joined a sense of place with the subtle flux of inner life.—*R.B.* (BAM; Sept. 13.)

A GIRL CUT IN TWO

The girl of the title of Claude Chabrol's impeccably calm and composed new movie is a TV weather presenter called Gabrielle Deneige (Ludivine Sagnier). Though not always as pure as her snowy name, she innocently drifts into the arms of two besmirching men: Charles Saint-Denis (François Berléand), a respected author decades her senior, and Paul Gaudens (Benoît Magimel), a chemicals-fortune heir who is an unsavory compound of dandy, cad, and wacko. Gabrielle is no fortune hunter, so what does she see in this pair? In a way, that is not Chabrol's business. The heart has its reasons, the reasons drive us mad, and his task is to forge a style from the result. His trademarks are all there: the quick, elliptical scenes, the unfussy fades to black, and the pulse of interest that can bring a camera hastening smoothly to inspect the characters, up close and personal, as their feelings ignite. Despite the seventy-eight-year-old director's Charles-like fondness for young flesh, the older people seem to attract him more; age has made them not wiser but more civilized and therefore, from his point of view, more corrupt. He remains as committed as ever to his twin duties as scourge and hedonist, yet one can't help wishing that he would, just once, cast off his own good narrative manners and arrange his passions into shameless, surreal anagrams of wit and lust. In French.—*A.L.* (8/25/08) (IFC Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND

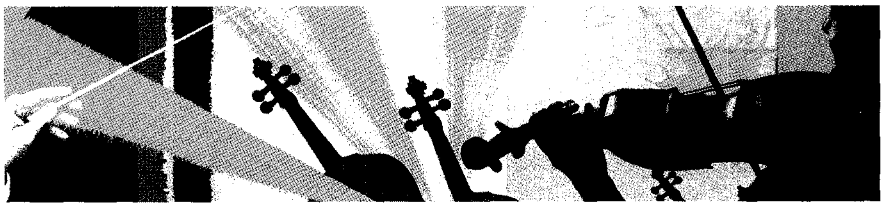
A Czech national epic served up with champagne and truffles. Jiří Menzel's graceful and leisurely movie, adapted from a 1974 novel by the masterly Bohumil Hrabal, covers an enormous time span, starting out in the thirties, passing through the Nazi Occupation, and then moving to the Communist period after the war. It covers an enormous range of experience, too, yet the style is consistently playful, even frivolous, and slyly erotic—at times, we might be watching a naked operetta. The movie dramatizes the incongruities of Czech experience by charting the unlikely progress of Jan Dítě (the Bulgarian actor Ivan Barnev), a charming Everyman—a waiter by trade, ever optimistic, completely unmarked by knowledge or experience. Barnev spins with his trays among the customers as if pirouetting on ice skates. He and Menzel play up the Chaplin associations; the diminutive actor has Chaplin's darting physical agility as well as his lecherous instincts beneath the honeyed manners. The small country, like the small man, gets pushed around by bullies but survives through instinct and guile. It's as if Menzel were celebrating not only Czech identity after the murderous twentieth century but his own cunning and perseverance as an artist. With Oldrich Kaiser playing Ditě as a middle-aged man. In Czech and German.—*D.D.* (9/1/08) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

THE LAND
Robert Flaherty's grim yet majestic documentary, about the American soil and those who work it, was commissioned in 1939 by the short-lived U.S. Film Service but completed, in the run-up to wartime, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (which never released it). In a mere forty-two minutes—culled from footage Flaherty shot over nearly two years—the film reveals, with a power akin to that of Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath," the hordes of farmers displaced during the Depression and the vast and implacable forces confronting them: widespread erosion within and beyond the Dust Bowl, the large-scale mechanization of farm tasks, competition from immigrant labor, and declining commodity prices. Both the colossal landscapes and the intimate portraits have a craggy, sculptural might, suggesting the epic scope of the geological history Flaherty captures in action. Though, in deference to government concerns, he ends the film on a note of optimism regarding the unprecedented bounty that could be anticipated from a resurgent heartland, he points far beyond the New Deal toward the Great Society as, in his poignant, epigrammatic commentary, he envisions the many people—"crumbs of the machine"—whom newly efficient farms would leave idled and superfluous.—*R.B.* (BAM; Sept. 14.)

MISTER FOE
David Mackenzie's new film, like its predecessors "Asylum" (2005) and "Young Adam" (2003), is never less than twisted and involved. Set largely in Edinburgh, it stars Jamie Bell as a troubled teenager named Hallam Foe; his troubles began, we soon learn, when his mother committed suicide, and the movie shows him not so much coming to terms with her death as immersing himself in her memory and, disastrously, finding some way to revive her. That means wearing her clothes and makeup and spying on a colleague from work (Sophia Myles) who resembles her—all of which feels dismayingly credible, although viewers may lose patience as the look-alike takes Hallam into her bed. The incestuous air of the tale spreads beyond the sexual, as when we see the kid burgling his own home or driving a wedge between his father, Julius (Ciarán Hinds), and Verity (Claire Forlani), the woman who is now stealing Julius's heart. The film is shifty and restless to the eye, almost adolescently keen to strip its characters bare, and we feel Hallam's exasperation as Bell, the hero of "Billy Elliot" (2000), tries once again to stomp the rage out of his system.—*A.L.* (9/8/08) (Angelika Film Center.)

PINEAPPLE EXPRESS
It's a two-guys-on-the-run action comedy, based on an old idea by Judd Apatow, who also co-produced. Seth Rogen, a process server in a suit, witnesses a drug rubout; James Franco, Seth's pot dealer, knows the murderer, who goes in pursuit of the two of them with his pals. Both men are stoned all the time, and have to keep reminding themselves, in long, muzzy conversations that are an important part of the picture, that they are actually in serious trouble. The movie, directed by David Gordon Green, has an odd, interesting stop-and-go rhythm. The violence is perpetrated with the means at hand—bongs, lamps, coffeepots—and people often apologize for the damage they are doing. The big shoot-out and explosion at the end, however, are depressingly conventional. With Danny R. McBride as an exceptionally slippery drug distributor who takes a lot of punishment. Written by Rogen and Evan Goldberg.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

A SECRET
Three generations of a French Jewish family as they haunt the memory and emotions of a young man (Mathieu Amalric). Claude Miller's movie, based on "Memory," a novel by Philippe Grimbert, begins in sunshine as the hero, a young boy in the nineteen-fifties, contemplates his goddess mother (Cécile De France) standing on a diving board. What he doesn't know is that all sorts of


JOHN RITTER

CLASSICAL NOTES
VIENNA BLOOD

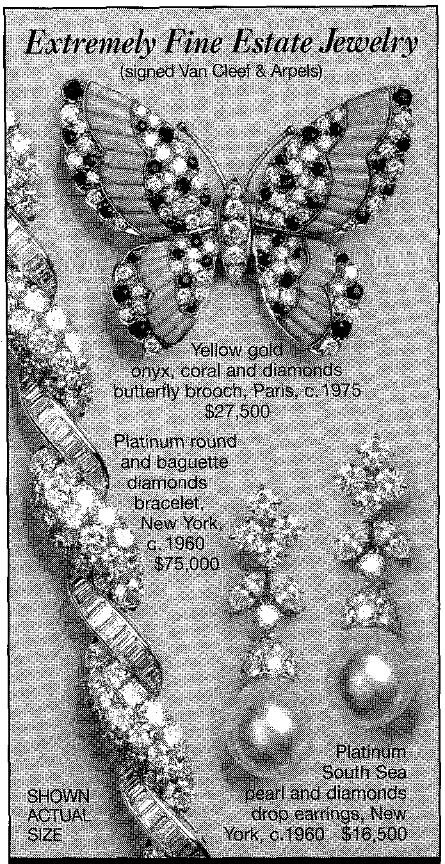
None of the great composers had a more unfortunate talent-to-luck ratio than Franz Schubert. **"Fierrabras,"** one of his ten completed operas, is a case in point. Though commissioned by Vienna's prestigious Kärntnertortheater in 1823, it was rejected for performance; Viennese audiences finally heard it in 1988. Now it is on DVD for the first time, in a recording (on EMI) made from performances at the Zürich Opera House in 2005-06.

To actually experience "Fierrabras" is to lessen one's pity for poor Schubert, if only a little. Like most of the great art-song composers, Schubert was not to the theatre born. The opera's plot is a lot of medieval derring-do between Frankish knights and menacing Moors, with a love triangle pointlessly thrown into the middle of it—and Schubert just can't come up with music that successfully drives the action or illuminates the characters.

"Fierrabras" does, however, contain a wealth of lovely melodies, and Franz Welser-Möst, that most Austrian of young conductors, paces the score remarkably well. Claus Guth's affecting production tosses out realism and stages the work as a grand Schubertiade, with a charismatic cast—including such singers as Juliane Banse, Jonas Kaufmann, and Michael Volle—dressed in sumptuous Biedermeier style. Schubert himself, personified by the diminutive actor Wolfgang Beuschel, walks about the stage, worrying over his creations.

When Franz Schreker composed his **Chamber Symphony,** for the faculty of Vienna's Academy of Music and the Performing Arts, his country was embroiled in the carnage of the First World War. You would never know it, however, from the limpid swirl of sound that Schreker produced in this astonishing twenty-five-minute piece. Peter Eötvös and the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra (on ECM) turn in a shimmering performance that reveals that Schreker's sole symphony is really a tone poem in disguise, a journey that seems to end up where it began. Filling out the disk is a powerful interpretation (with the master cellist Heinrich Schiff) of the compellingly eclectic **Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra** (1989-96) by Friedrich Cerha, the doyen of contemporary Viennese composers.

—*Russell Platt*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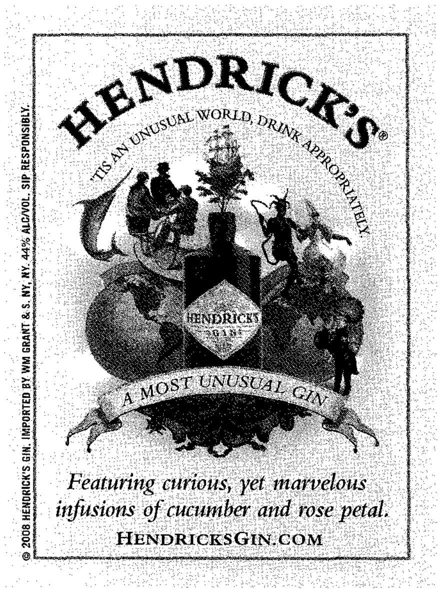
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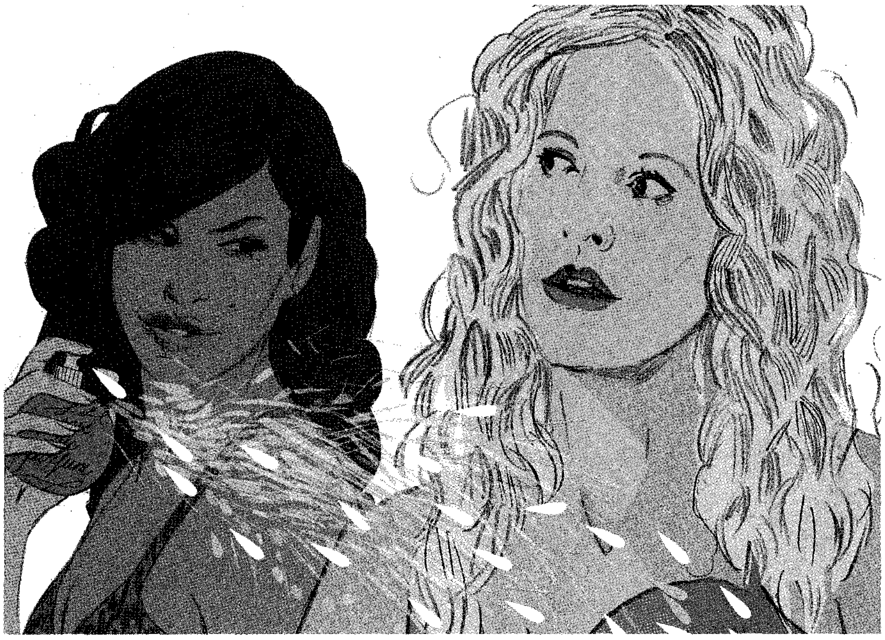
erotic intrigues swirled around her during the German Occupation and meshed disastrously with the French collaboration. Miller gives us fascinating glimpses of the family's life in both prosperous and straitened times—the movie opens up French Jewish life in a way never before seen in this country. In French.—*D.D.* (IFC Center and Paris.)

TRAITOR

Part thriller, part moral drama, and only so-so either way. Don Cheadle is Samir Horn, a Muslim raised in Chicago who served in the U.S. special services but then "went over" to Islamic terrorists who are planning attacks on America. At least, that's what Clayton (Guy Pearce), a persistent and highly airborne counter-terrorism specialist in the F.B.I., thinks. Despite its fresh settings (it was shot in Morocco and Marseilles, as well as in Chicago) and its view of how terrorists recruit and train people and talk to one another, the movie has the familiar form of something like "Sleeper Cell," a Showtime series from 2005-06 about an African-American Muslim who penetrates a terrorist group in Los Angeles, or of an undercover-cop picture like "Donnie Brasco," in which the good-guy hero enters the Mafia and has to decide whether to take part in crimes in order to sustain his credibility among the hoods. The acting is generally solid, though the terrorist leaders, when you meet them, are suave in the manner of Hollywood Nazis from 1942, who ran art galleries, wore silk dressing gowns, and spoke in the most cultivated tones. With Saïd Taghmaoui, as Omar, an ardent Moroccan terrorist.—*D.D.* (9/1/08) (In wide release.)



Eva Mendes and Meg Ryan star in "The Women," an update of the 1939 drama.

RACHEL DOMM

TROPIC THUNDER

This comedy begins with a film-within-a-film, a Vietnam War movie that's being filmed on location, a savage spectacular with a bulging budget and a trio of major stars: the depleted tough guy Tugg Speedman (Ben Stiller), the five-time Academy Award winner Kirk Lazarus (Robert Downey, Jr.), and a drug-hazed comic lardass, Jeff Portnoy (Jack Black). When their hapless British director (Steve Coogan) is blown up by a land mine, the stars are left to fend for themselves in the jungle, whereupon they are beset by real enemies—a horde of drug dealers—and forced to fight back. Stiller not only stars in the film but also directed it and wrote the script, with Etan Cohen and Justin Theroux. These guys seem to be filing a stream of reports from the borders of taste; their deepest dread is to stay in the comfort zone. Their most controversial move is to have Downey perform entirely in blackface, but they carefully frame the insult in cooling ironies. As a jab at the movie business, "Tropic Thunder" is flailing and unfocussed, and the caterwauling of the characters and the nastiness (at once silly and bloody) of the special effects leave you feeling more embattled than entertained. It's every man for himself, in every sequence, as though Stiller needed to prove that movie stars—these few, these unhappy few, this band of bastards—were the opposite of noble warriors.—*A.L.* (8/25/08) (In wide release.)

TROUBLE THE WATER

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In limited release.)

VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA

Woody Allen's new movie has an easy, flowing vitality to it, a sun-drenched splendor that never falters. Two American girls go off to Barcelona for the summer—Vicky (Rebecca Hall), who is intelligent, skeptical, cautious, and thoroughly engaged to a corporate lawyer in New York, and Cristina (Scarlett Johansson), who is more adventurous than her friend but unformed and easily dissatisfied, a seeker without a lodestar. In the magnificent city, they meet Juan Antonio (Javier Bardem), a painter who is incapable of spending a night alone. Both women get involved with him, and the movie becomes a complicated triangle that forms, breaks apart, and re-forms, as well as a lengthy exploration of the eternal struggle between security and passion, dependency and anarchic freedom. Juan Antonio's former wife, Maria Elena (Penélope Cruz), who is highly intelligent and artistically talented but so tempestuous that she creates havoc wherever she goes, crashes into the movie and busts everything apart. The American girls yearn for something more than bourgeois stability, but Allen means for us to understand that a life of passion alone can lead to craziness and violence. Shot in sumptuous golds and ochres by Javier Aguirresarobe.—*D.D.* (8/11 & 18/08) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

AUGUST EVENING: Village East Cinemas. **COLLEGE:** In wide release. **THE POOL:** Film Forum. **YEAR OF THE FISH:** Angelika Film Center.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—"Essential Cinema." All films are directed by Dziga Vertov. Sept. 12 at 7: "Kino-Eye" (1925; silent). ♦ Sept. 13 at 5: "Enthusiasm" (1931). ♦ Sept. 14 at 5:30 "Three Songs About Lenin" (1934). ♦ Sept. 14 at 7: "The Eleventh Year" (1928). ♦ The films of Robert Downey. Sept. 12-18 at 7:30: "Chafed Elbows" (1966). ♦ Sept. 12 and Sept. 16 at 9 and Sept. 14 at 6: "No More Excuses" (1968). ♦ Sept. 13 at 6 and Sept. 14 at 9: "Babo 73" (1964). ♦ Sept. 15 at 9: "Moment to Moment" (1975).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—In revival. Sept. 10-11 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "The 39 Steps" (1935, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ "Flaherty Film Seminar." Sept. 12 at 7: "Calavera Highway" (2008, Renee Tajima-Peña). ♦ Sept. 13 at 4:30 and 9:15: "The Exiles" (†). ♦ Sept. 13 at 6:50: "Casa de Lava" (†). ♦ Sept. 14 at 4:30: "God Is My Safest Bunker" (2008, Lee Wang), "Cargo" (2001, Laura Waddington), and "The Form of the Good" (2006, James T. Hong). ♦ Sept. 14 at 6:50: "The Land" (†) and "Black Sea Files" (2005, Ursula Biemann). ♦ Through Sept. 30: The films of Howard Hawks. Sept. 15 at 6:50 and 9:15: "Twentieth Century" (1934). ♦ Sept. 16 at 6:50 and 9:15: "The Criminal Code" (1931).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—"The French Crime Wave." Sept. 10-11 at 1, 2:40, 4:20, 6, 7:45, and 9:30: "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ Through Sept. 25: The films of David Lean. Sept. 12-13 at 1, 5:25, and 9:50: "Great Expectations" (1946). ♦ Sept. 12-13 at 3:15 and 7:40: "Oliver Twist" (1948). ♦ Sept. 14-15 at 2:50, 6:20, and 9:50: "Brief Encounter" (1945). ♦ Sept. 14-15 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "Blithe Spirit" (1945). ♦ Sept. 16 at 3:40 and 7:35: "The Passionate Friends" (1949). ♦ Sept. 16 at 1:30, 5:25, and 9:20: "Madeleine" (1950). ♦ In revival. Sept. 12-18 at 1, 4:30, and 8: "The Godfather" (1972, Francis Ford Coppola).

IFC CENTER

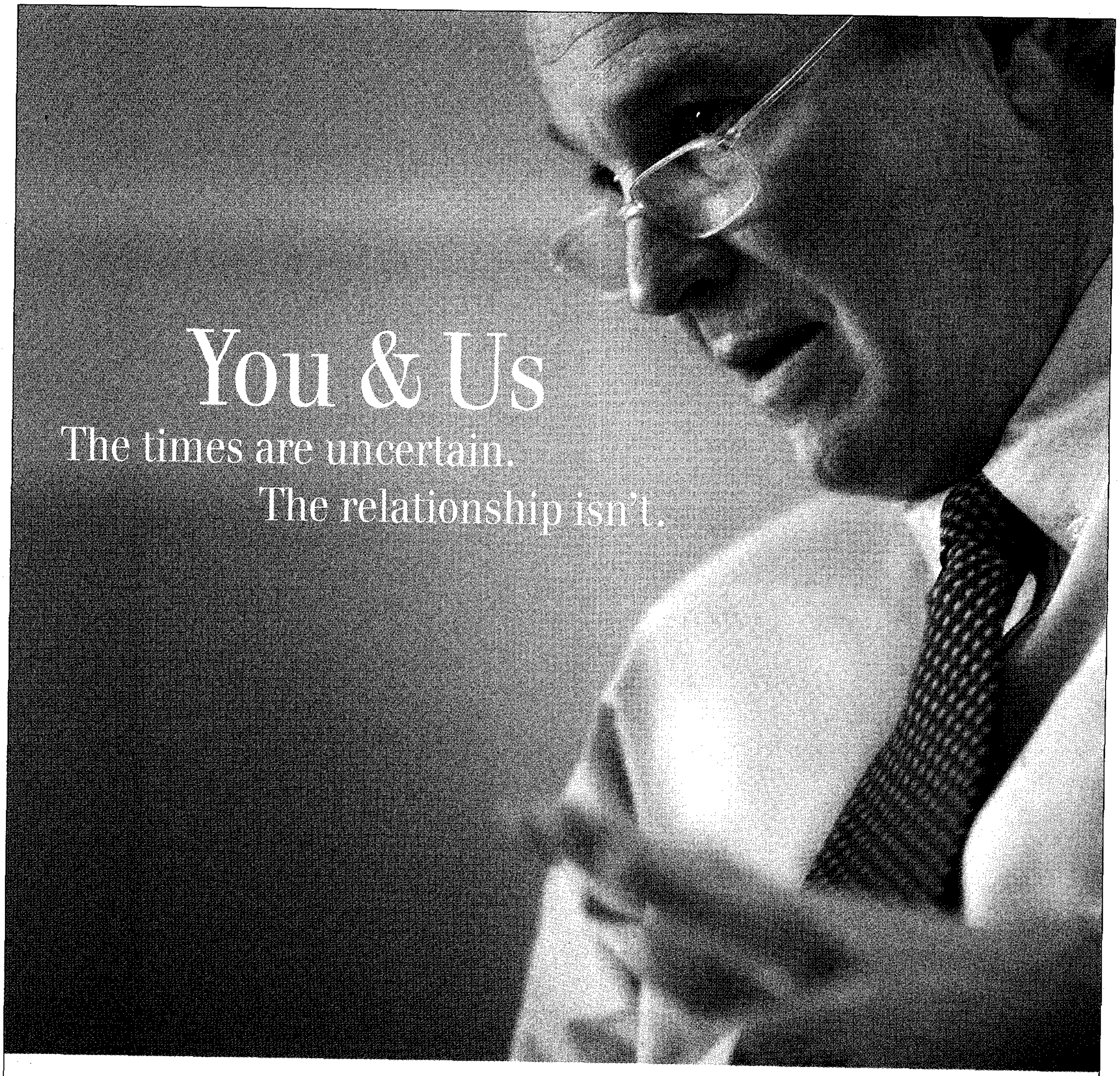
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." Sept. 12-13: "The Love-Ins" (1967, Arthur Dreifuss). ♦ Slamdance benefit screening. Sept. 16 at 8: "Schizopolis" (1996, Steven Soderbergh), introduced by the director.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—"Still Moving." Sept. 10-12 at 1:30 and Sept. 13 at 6:30: "Wavelength" (1967, Michael Snow). ♦ "Dali in New York." Sept. 10-11 at 1:30: Short-film program, including "Rose Hobart" (1936, Joseph Cornell). ♦ "Salvador Dali: Creator/Collaborator Redux." Sept. 10 at 5:30 and Sept. 15 at 8:30: "Un Chien Andalou" (1929, Luis Buñuel; silent) and "L'Âge d'Or" (1930, Buñuel; in French). ♦ Sept. 10 at 7:30: "Scarface" (1932, Howard Hawks). ♦ "Salvador Dali: Consumer/Consumed." Sept. 11 at 5: "Belle de Jour" (†) and "The Death of Salvador Dali" (2005, Delaney Bishop). ♦ Sept. 11 at 5:30: "Richard III" (1955, Laurence Olivier). ♦ Sept. 11 at 8:30: "She Done Him Wrong" (1933, Lowell Sherman). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5:30: "The Little Princess" (1939, Walter Lang). ♦ Sept. 12 at 8: "The Science of Sleep" (2006, Michel Gondry). ♦ Sept. 15 at 6: "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton). ♦ "Jazz Score." Sept. 12 at 7: "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," parts 1 and 2 (2006, Spike Lee). ♦ Sept. 13 at 2: "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," parts 3 and 4 (2006, Lee). ♦ Sept. 13 at 7: "She's Gotta Have It" (1986, Lee). ♦ "Looking at Music." Sept. 13 at 2: "Scorpio Rising" (1963, Kenneth Anger) and "Flaming Creatures" (1963, Jack Smith). ♦ Sept. 13 at 6:30: "Wavelength" (1967, Snow) and "Crossroads" (1976, Bruce Conner).

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

150 W. 17th St. (212-620-5000, ext. 344)—"Cabaret Cinema." Sept. 12 at 9:30: "Stir Crazy" (1980, Sidney Poitier), introduced by Bruce Jay Friedman.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WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—"Latinbeat 2008." All films are in Spanish unless otherwise noted. Sept. 11 at 8:30, Sept. 12 at 1, and Sept. 13 at 7:30: "El Cayo de la Muerte" (2007, Wolney Oliveira). ♦ Sept. 12 at 3, Sept. 13 at 9:30, and Sept. 14 at 2:30: "O Pai, O" (2007, Monique Gardenberg; in Portuguese). ♦ Sept. 12 at 5 and Sept. 15 at 7: "Little Country" (2008, Ana Díez). ♦ Sept. 12 at 6:45 and Sept. 15 at 9: "Ángel" (2007, Jacobo Morales). ♦ Sept. 12 at 9:30, Sept. 13 at 1, and Sept. 14 at 7: "Lamb of God" (2008, Lucía Cedrón). ♦ Sept. 13 at 3 and Sept. 15 at 4:45: "What Happened to Santiago" (1989, Morales). ♦ Sept. 13 at 5:30 and Sept. 16 at 5: "Encarnación" (2007, Anahí Berneri).

READINGS AND TALKS

BUCKMINSTER FULLER SYMPOSIUM
Engineers, architects, artists, and writers discuss the polymathic innovator, who is currently the subject of a show at the Whitney Museum of American Art. (The Great Hall, Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St. For more information, visit www.whitney.org. Sept. 12-13.)

BROOKLYN BOOK FESTIVAL
Joan Didion, Richard Price, Russell Banks, Dorothy Allison, and many others are expected to take part in readings and discussions in and around Borough Hall. Some hundred and fifty booksellers and publishers, who will offer their wares, will also be on hand. (Sept. 14, from 10 to 6. For more information, visit www.brooklynbookfestival.org.)

"LIVE FROM THE NYPL"
The French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy inaugurates the new season of readings and talks at the New York Public Library by joining the Slovenian writer Slavoj Žižek for a discussion about human rights, violence, and capitalism. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-868-4444. Sept. 16 at 7.)

HAPPY ENDING LOUNGE
Jonathan Lethem, Colson Whitehead, Meg Wolitzer, and other left-leaning writers gather at this Chinatown bar for an "Authors for Obama" benefit reading. (302 Broome St. 212-334-9676. Sept. 17 at 7.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"CHRISTMAS ON MARS"
The slightly psychedelic Oklahoma-based rock ensemble the Flaming Lips has been around since the early eighties. Their career has had its aberrations, such as the 1993 hit song "She Don't Use Jelly," and its critical successes, including the 2002 album "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots." Not content just to conquer the airwaves, the Lips are reportedly also working on a Broadway musical based on "Yoshimi," and, after seven years of work, they have recently completed a movie, "Christmas on Mars: A Fantastical Film Freakout Featuring the Flaming Lips." The science-fiction extravaganza—involving the red planet, a baby, and an alien who dresses up like Santa (played by the front man and resident genius, Wayne Coyne, who also directed the film)—is being screened at a specially outfitted theatre at K.G.B., a bar and performance space in the East Village. In keeping with the band's odd way of looking at the world, some of the screenings start at 7 A.M. (85 E. 4th St. Sept. 12-30. For more information, visit www.cinemapurgatorio.com.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES
The auction houses are gearing up for the fall season, with serious (though not monumental) sales going on both midtown and downtown. **Sotheby's** presents an offering of contemporary art (Sept. 10), led by one of Roy Lichtenstein's spare, idealized interiors from the nineteen-nineties ("Interior with Three Hanging Lamps"). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.) ♦ The first sale at **Christie's** this week is a decorous selection of Impressionist and modern art (Sept. 10), including several paintings of beguiling ladies by Jean-Pierre Cassigneul, as well as works by Pissarro, Brasilier, and Derain. Such pleasing pieces go down smoothly—like good wine, which is conveniently on offer a few days later at the house's first fall sale of vintages (Sept. 13). It features the usual fine suspects: Pétrus, Lafite-Rothschild, Romanée-Conti, Latour, and the like. Christie's then gets the jump on the cavalcade known as Asia Week by offering two sales on Sept. 15: one of Himalayan bronzes, the other of a wide range of Tibetan and Nepalese art works from the collection of the Zimmerman family. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ **Phillips** rolls out another of its selling exhibitions, this one devoted to the British artist Brian Clarke, known for his compositions in stained glass (Sept. 15-Oct. 1). (450 W. 15th St. 212-940-1200.)

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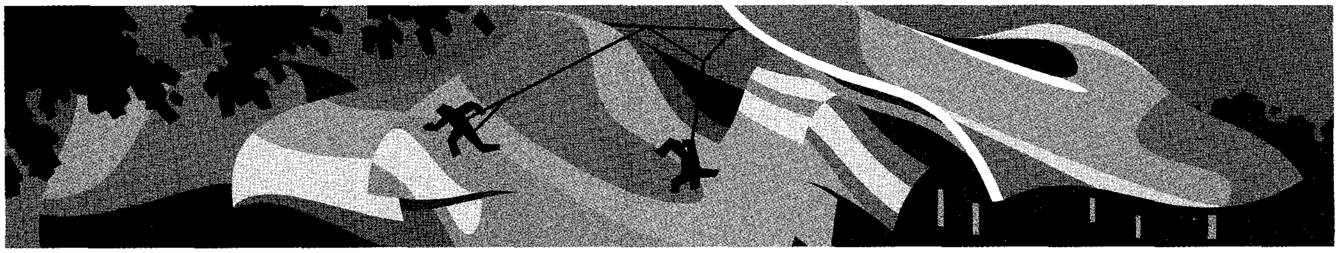
Visit the Goings On blog, at www.newyorker.com/go/goingson, for additional cultural coverage and commentary.



"Rapture," at the Fisher Center, at Bard College.

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
CITY OF ANGLES
Sept. 17-Oct. 19

Despite California's superior light and climate, New York remained a center of movie production during the big-studio era. In conjunction with the publication of Richard Koszarski's "Hollywood on the Hudson," MOMA offers films made in New York between 1920 and 1939, including D. W. Griffith's "Way Down East," starring Lillian Gish, and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," from 1920, with John Barrymore. (212-708-9480.)

READINGS AND TALKS
LOOKING BACK
Sept. 24

The Tenement Museum marks its twentieth anniversary and that of the Tompkins Square Riot—in which the neighborhood's denizens clashed with police over a 1 A.M. curfew—with a night of stories about the East Village before the days of gentrification. (212-982-8420.)

DANCE
CRAWL SPACE
Sept. 25-28 and Oct. 2-5

The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, at Bard College, is the site of the latest piece by Noémie Lafrance. In "Rapture," Lafrance and her company, SENS, crawl, leap, and rappel across the building's undulating façade. (845-758-7900.)

ART
DARK SHADOWS
Sept. 25-Jan. 29

Though associated with Austrian Expressionism, Alfred Kubin lacks the name recognition of his contemporaries Josef Hoffmann and Gustav Klimt, in part because he bypassed the decorative in pursuit of his nightmarish visions. The Neue Galerie will exhibit the artist's early works in "Alfred Kubin: Drawings, 1897-1909." (212-628-6200.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
SERENITY NOW
Sept. 27

With his radiant "Neruda Songs," premièred in 2005 by his late wife, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Peter Lieberson wrote a piece to challenge the best of Barber and Strauss. Miller Theatre hosts a "Composer Portrait" concert that offers a range of his works. (212-854-7799.)

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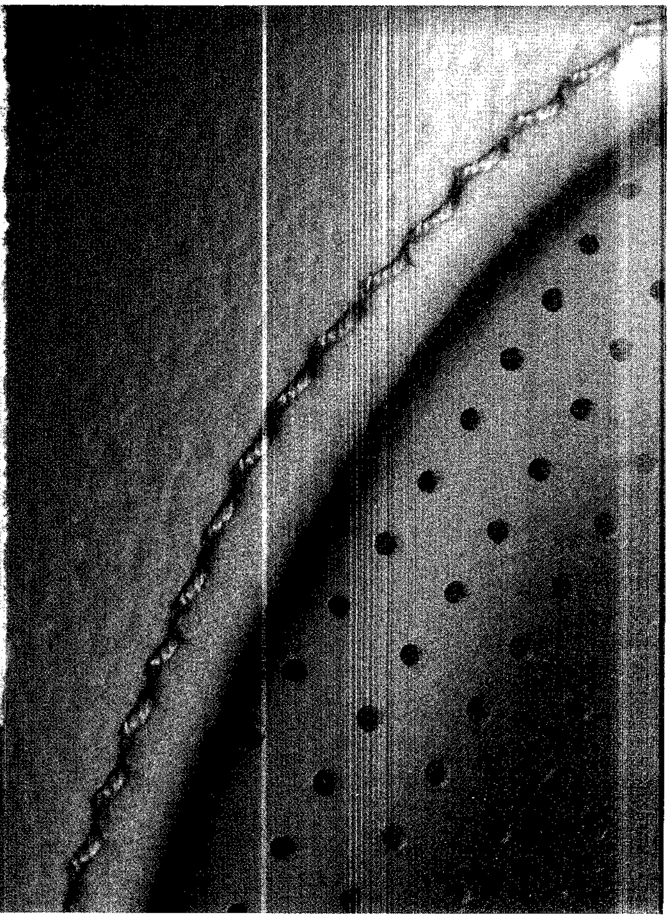

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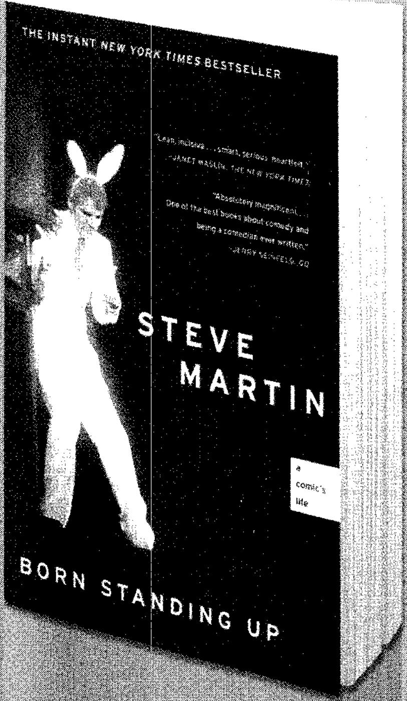
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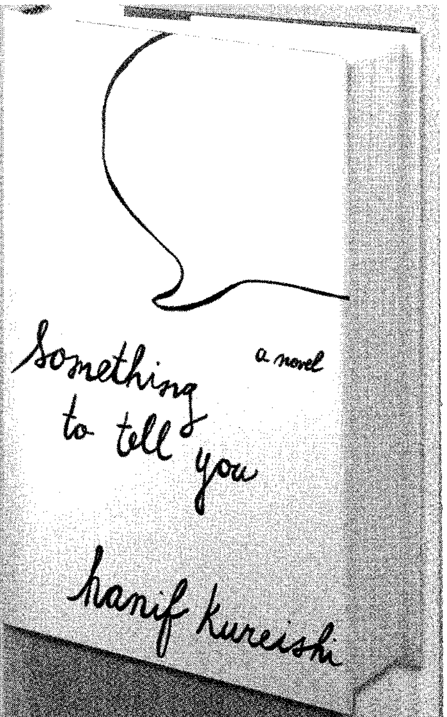
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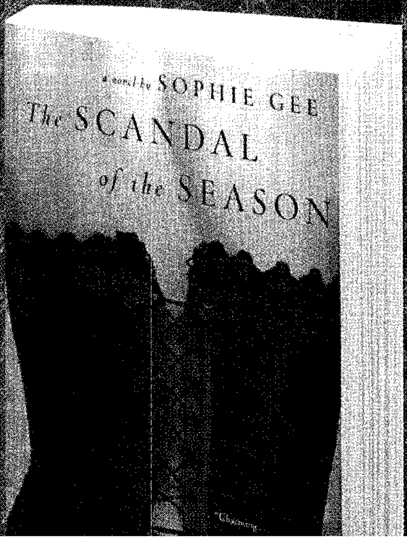
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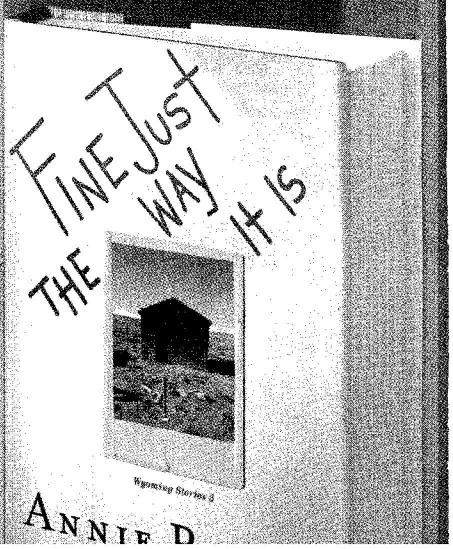
FINE JUST THE WAY IT IS
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THE
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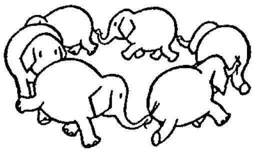
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

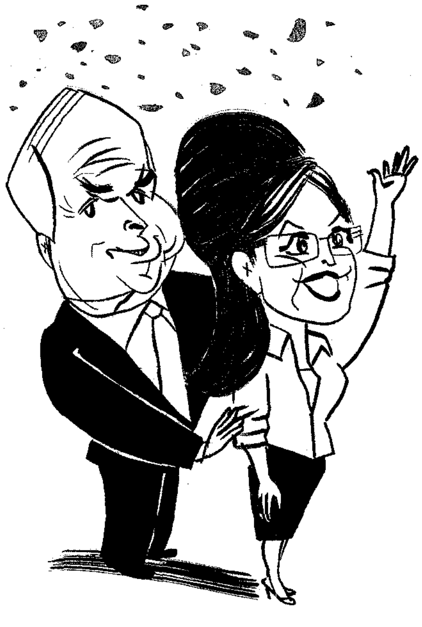
COMMENT
LET IT RAIN



A couple of weeks before August 28th—the night that Barack Obama accepted the Democratic nomination for President, in a Denver football stadium—Stuart Shepard, the digital-media director of the lobbying arm of Focus on the Family, one of the most powerful organizations on the religious right, posed a question to his Internet viewers. "Would it be wrong," he asked, "to pray for rain?" Shepard's answer, apparently, was no, because he proceeded to do just that. He prayed for there to be rain—abundant rain, torrential rain, "rain of Biblical proportions"—in Denver on August 28th. "I'm praying for unexpected, unanticipated, unforecasted rain that starts two minutes before the speech is set to begin," he said, adding, "I know there will probably be people who will pray for seventy-two degrees and clear skies, but this isn't a contest."

In the event, Obama gave his speech under clear skies with the thermometer at seventy-two degrees. It's hard to draw definitive conclusions from this about the efficacy of prayer. Still, Shepard and others who assume that the Almighty faxes meteorological talking points as a matter of routine must now be puzzling over what He meant last week by arranging for a hurricane just severe enough to disrupt the opening of the Republican National Convention (and freshen the public's memories of the present Administration's Katrina incompetence) but, mercifully, not so severe as to do too much damage to the innocent.

The Focus on the Family approach to divine intervention having fizzled, John McCain needed a deus ex machina. The deus—or rather, in this case, the dea—he found, sprung fully formed from the brow of Rush Limbaugh, is the governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin. The machina is "the base," the Christianist conservatives who have come to dominate the Republican Party. Governor Palin ticks every box on the checklist of the social right. She opposes abortion rights, even for women and girls made pregnant by rape or incest. She thinks that creationism should be taught alongside evolution in public schools. She does not believe that global warming is caused by human activity. She supports public funding for home-schooling. She is against stem-cell research. She opposes "explicit" sex education and supports the abstinence-only kind, though she is surely aware of its indifferent record of success.



With the selection of Sarah Palin, McCain completes the job of defusing the enmity (and forgoing the honor) he earned in 2000, when he condemned Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell as "agents of intolerance." His motives in choosing her were entirely tactical and mostly—the mot juste is that of Mike Murphy, once McCain's top political aide, overheard by an errant microphone—cynical. Besides placating the right, those motives included the short-term goal of preëmpting the weekend news cycles that might otherwise have been devoted to reviewing Obama's triumphant Democratic Convention. The price that McCain paid, and that could sooner or later be exacted from the nation, was the abandonment of what he had repeatedly called his overriding requirement for a Vice-President: someone who would be ready to take his place at a moment's notice—"you know, immediately."

According to *Time*, Palin's acceptance address was drafted—by a former

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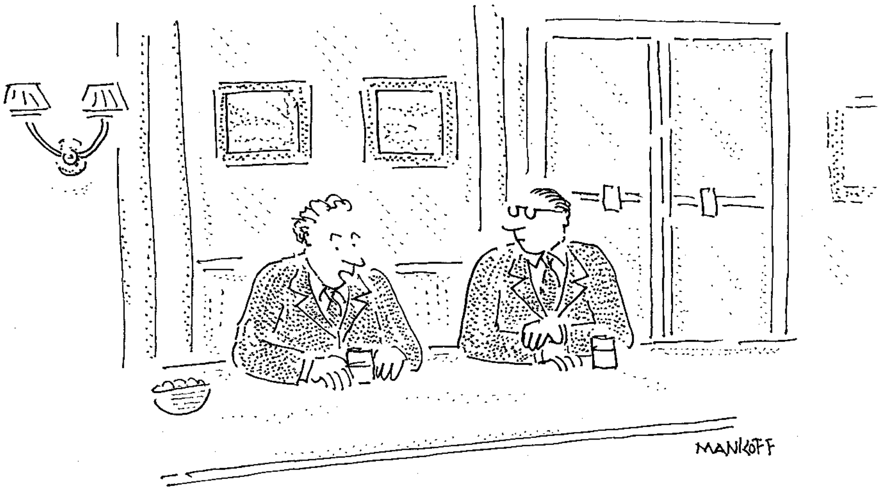
Bush White House speechwriter—before she was chosen and then retailored to fit her. Like almost every major speech at that Convention (Mike Huckabee's being an exception), it substituted sarcasm for humor in its sneers at Obama. "I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer, except that you have actual responsibilities," she said. "Al Qaeda terrorists still plot to inflict catastrophic harm on America, and he's worried that someone won't read them their rights," she said, a little chillingly. "Listening to him speak, it's easy to forget that this is a man who has authored two memoirs but not a single major law or even a reform, not even in the state senate," she said. This last was simply false; Obama's legislative record, both in Illinois and (given its brevity) in Washington, is impressive. (Also, it's McCain whose books have been "authored." Obama wrote his.) But the speech was well crafted and more than competently delivered, with even its most mean-spirited lines accompanied by perky smiles and wrinklings of the nose. McCain's gamble, though shockingly irresponsible as an act of potential governance, is, for now, a political success: Palin attracted close to forty million television viewers, the crowd in the hall went wild for her, and a Rasmussen poll taken immediately afterward showed her with higher "positives" than any of the three men on the national tickets.

After that, it was inevitable that the Presidential nominee's acceptance speech would be an anticlimax. But, if it did not excite, neither did it disgust. McCain was gracious to his opponent—"I wouldn't be an American worthy of the name if I didn't honor Senator Obama and his supporters for their achievement"—and his call to "comfort the afflicted" and "defend the rights of the oppressed" sounded interestingly like a community organizer's job description. The speech contained only one serious falsehood: the charge that Obama would "force families into a government-run health care system where a bureaucrat stands between you and your doctor." It was withering in its rhetorical critique of McCain's own party. "We lost the trust of the American people when some Republicans gave in to the temptations of corruption," he said. "We lost their trust when we valued our power over our principles." He promised to bring Democrats and independents into his Administration. He acknowledged the pain of America's sinking economy. But the sketchy solutions he proposed were indistinguishable from George W. Bush's.

At the end, McCain peered not into the future but forty years into the past. His retelling of his experience as a prisoner of war in Vietnam was powerful, and the lesson he drew from it—that it caused him "to learn the limits of my selfish independence"—was the very opposite of Republican boilerplate. But its backward-looking orientation—at one point, McCain described where he was when he learned about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor—underlined his age and, with it, the recklessness of the most important decision he has made as a candidate.

The speech made clear that it will *not* be enough for Obama and the Democrats simply to equate McCain with Bush. If McCain wins, he will, almost certainly, "change the tone," as Bush promised, falsely, to do eight years ago. In certain details, McCain may even change the policies, though there was little in his speech to encourage that hope. But he is seventy-two years old; if he is elected and reelected, he will be in his eighties by the end of his second term. If he does become our next President, then all of us, believers and nonbelievers alike, had better pray for his health.

—Hendrik Hertzberg



"No, I don't need an alarm clock—anxiety is my alarm clock."

DEPT. OF REGENERATION
ACT YOUR AGE

Last week, in St. Paul, a band of anti-war protesters outside the Xcel Center confronted a group of stiff-looking guys in business suits as they tried to make their way into the Convention. There were chants of "Shame! Shame!" and a little pushing. Eventually, a flying V of mounted policemen came to the rescue, helping escort the men through the security gates. But the pin-striped guys, it turns out, weren't Republicans; they were a group of teen-agers from the Junior Statesmen Foundation, a nonpartisan student group that helps high-school kids become informed voters. The next day, outside the Ron Paul rally, most of them were still exhilarated by their brush with violence.

"It was fun," Kylar Park, a seventeen-year-old from Guam, who had a faint trace of a mustache, said.

"Yeah," Jordan Shelton, fifteen, from Irving, Texas, said. "We ran over one of the protesters with the horses!"

The demonstrators could be forgiven for their confusion. It was a week when young Republicans acted like old ones; old Republicans acted like giddy teenagers; and, over all—as John McCain's ninety-six-year-old mother made stump speeches, and the new candidate for Vice-President morphed, overnight, from mother to grandmother-to-be—it was hard to keep the generations in order. At

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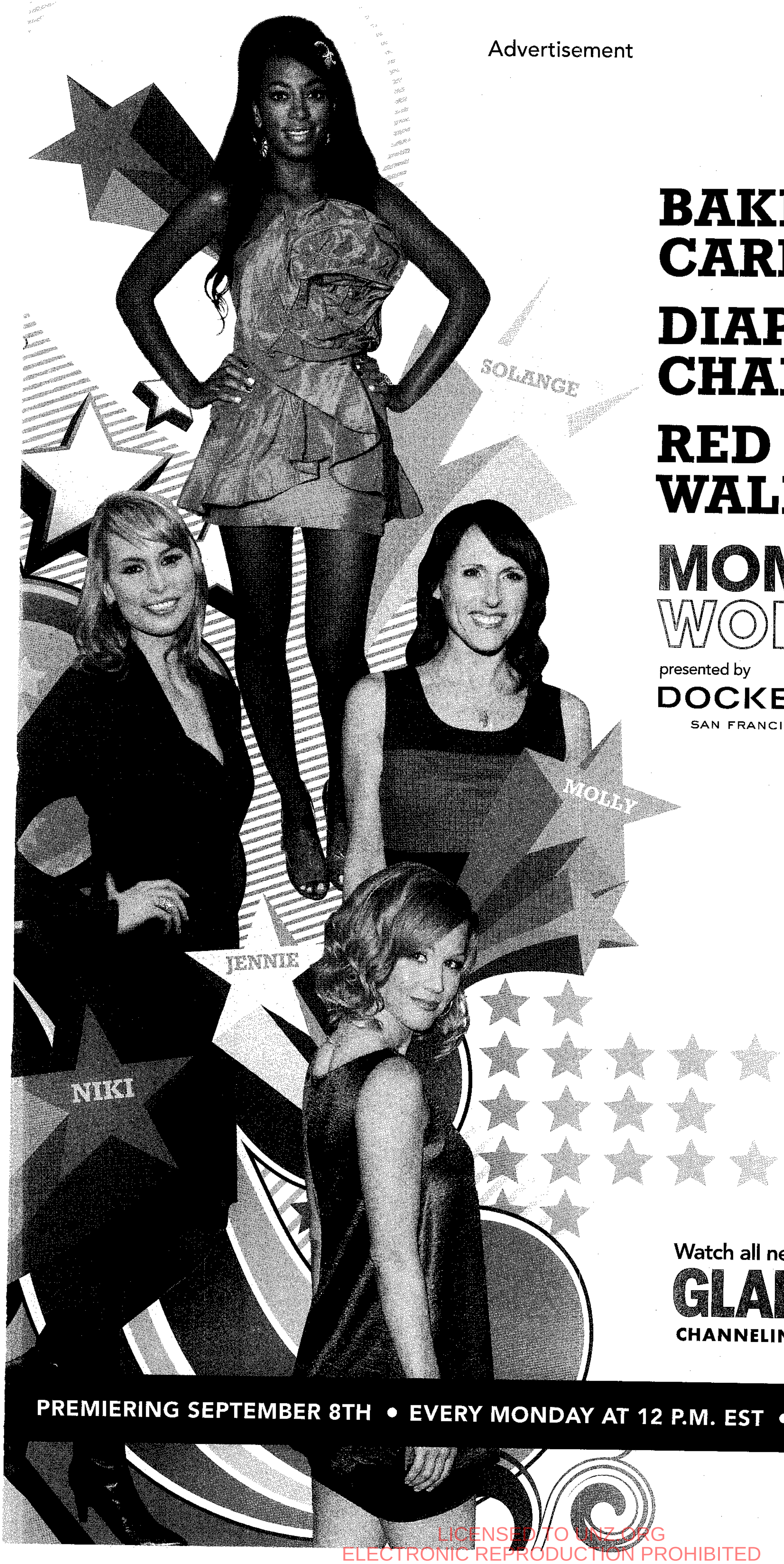

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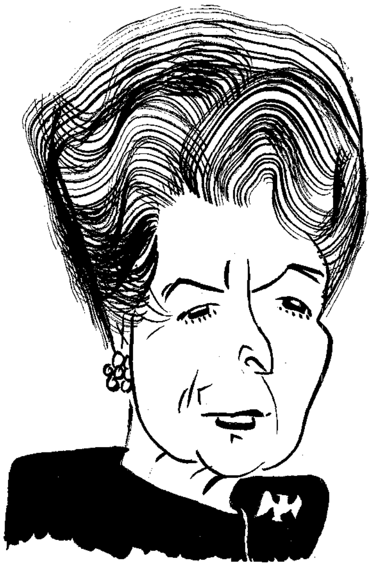
the Arkansas party, Mike Huckabee worked a crowd of middle-aged men into a lather with his electric-bass playing on "Sweet Home Alabama," then tossed handfuls of glow sticks from the stage. CNN staffers debated the meaning of MILF versus GMILF at a party for the Louisiana delegation, and an Alaskan delegate who works for Merrill Lynch hatched a plan to flee the Convention hall for the Water Park of America.



Phyllis Schlafly

At a party given by Rudy Giuliani, on the roof of the Hotel Seven, amid a cloud of cigar smoke, Craig Eaton, of Brooklyn, and Vince Tabone, of Queens, were calling Sarah Palin the new Giuliani. "I think she's great!" Eaton said, over loud Paula Abdul music. "She's got executive experience, and she rallies the base," Tabone said. "I think she's an attractive candidate."

"You can't say that," Eaton said. "It's sexist."

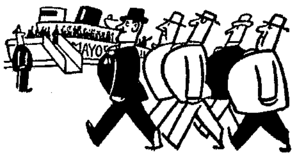
The next morning, Miss Texas, Rebecca Robinson, explained Palin's appeal. "Here's the deal," she said. "She is a former beauty queen. A lot of people look at beauty pageants and say, 'Oh, God, these girls are coming out with their sashes—yuck—they don't know how to *do* anything.' But you learn how to think on your feet. I was like her—I was a down-home country girl who learned to put on makeup." Alice Rekeweg, a fiftyish Texas delegate who was passing out scarves printed with the Ninety-first Psalm, said that she had been surprised by Palin's selection. "But I really like her," she said. "She drives a motorcycle, and so do I."

One attendee who was decidedly not surprised by Palinmania was Phyllis Schlafly, the eighty-four-year-old conservative activist. Two months earlier, Schlafly had booked Palin as the guest of honor at the Life of the Party party, the pro-life get-together that she threw on Tuesday. (The prospective Veep pulled out; Schlafly publicly chided the McCain campaign for stealing her speaker.) Schlafly, looking wispy and alert, was sitting on a couch in her hotel room on the morning of Palin's speech. She was wearing a powdery-purple dress with a flashing "Life of the Party" button and a necklace of gold charms. She fingered the charms and said, "These tell the story of my life": a "Stop ERA" medallion; a Phi Beta Kappa key from Washington University in St. Louis, 1944; an elephant; a pineapple (honoring her co-author on several books, the late Admiral Chester Ward, of Honolulu); and a little bullet ("I worked my way through college testing ammunition"). She said that all the excitement made her reflect on the days when she was the hot young thing among conservatives, after the publication, in 1964, of her first book, "A Choice Not an Echo."

"One of the reasons I was able to defeat the feminists was that they really didn't believe I could do what I was doing," she said. "I was just a housewife from a small town in Illinois." She said that she sees Palin as a younger version of herself. "I did run for Congress in 1970, when I had six children, though I didn't win. As I say to some of these reporters who are questioning Sarah Palin, the only person whose approval she had to get was her husband's." She winked. "And that makes them mad."

—*Lizzie Widdicombe*

BRONX CHEERS DEM DELEGATES



The Republican Party in New York City is not unlike a species of tropical bird, in that it has evolved in unusual ways, will most likely never be dominant, and has always held a tenuous status in the political ecology of the five boroughs. During the Republican Convention, last week, New York City Republicans were certainly exotic. Overheard in the lobby of the hotel where they stayed: "Republicans from New York are pinko Commies anywhere else."

On the third night of the Convention, Rudy Giuliani was scheduled to speak, followed by Sarah Palin, and the delegation from New York went to hear them, and to cast its votes in the official roll call. Jay Savino, the chairman of the Bronx County Republican Party, walked into the Xcel Center unshaven, having flown to Minnesota on Monday with a few other delegates and with Giuliani, in a jet belonging to John Catsimatidis, the Gristede's supermarket mogul, who is considering a run for mayor. Beside Savino was Juan Carlos Polanco, a man with dark hair that was gelled flat on top but then broke out into a cascade of curls down the back of his head. Polanco, who had been a batboy for the Yankees, is an attorney on the staff of the New York State Assembly minority leader, James Tedisco.

Polanco was chewing gum and talking to a Bronx alternate delegate named Anthony J. Ribustello, who had the build of a sumo wrestler and was wearing a hoop earring and a pin-striped suit. (He played the character Dante Greco on "The Sopranos.") Country music had been piped into the hall. Savino said, "My wife likes this stuff. Now, 87.7, the Pulse of New York—DJ Surge from the Bronx—I wish *they* were spinning here, but you get the cards that you're dealt."

Ruben Estrada, a delegate from Orange County, was standing nearby. He said, "We should have a poster next time: 'Obama, fuhgeddaboudit!' I mean, come on, we're from New York here."

Savino turned toward a man in a blue sports jacket and said, "Hey, Chairman." It was Vincent Reda, an elderly delegate from Rockland County, and he seemed perplexed. Delegates from Wisconsin were gathering across the aisle, and Reda had seen a man in a hat that resembled a large hunk of Swiss cheese.

"What *is* that?" Reda said.

The former New York senator Al D'Amato came in and took a seat near the former State Senate majority leader Joe Bruno, who acknowledged that seeing Giuliani onstage, but not on the ticket, would be bittersweet. (The next morning, during a breakfast for New York Republicans, Bruno delivered a gleeful address that compared Eliot Spitzer—"articulate, fancy, dancey, prancey"—to Obama.)

The speaking had begun, and the governor of Hawaii approached the podium. "If she says, 'Aloha,' I'm out," Polanco said. Savino had been wearing a pin that said "Catholics for McCain," but swapped it for one that said "Hottest VP from the Coolest State." He began yelling. "Yeah! She's hot! Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!" A nearby delegate said, "You need therapy."

Giuliani tore into Obama, sending the New York delegates into a fit of ecstasy. When he used the word "*nada*," they started chanting, "*Na-da! Na-da! Na-da!*" Polanco punched the air. "We're here!" he yelled. "Did you hear that?"

When Palin began to speak, the delegates from New York were infatuated. "She'll kick ass," Reda said. Savino said, "Did I tell ya? She's tremendous. I'm gonna scream, 'Marry me,' if I can just get up the nerve."

"Is polygamy legal in Alaska?" Polanco asked.

Palin was speaking about her husband, Todd, who stood and waved. Everyone in the arena turned toward him and applauded, except those near the Bronx delegates, who were pointing at Savino and chanting, "Jea-lous! Jealous! Jea-lous!"

When Palin spoke the words "My fellow-citizens, the American Presidency is not supposed to be a journey of 'personal discovery,' " the crowd roared, and Savino seemed to achieve a state of emotional supernova. His voice was hoarse, but he continued to shout. He drew out the words "*Ohhh! Myyy! Goddd!*"

It was close to midnight. The Xcel Center began to empty, and the men went out into the city of St. Paul and looked for a cab. They were trying to get to a party at a former speakeasy, where gangsters had gone to war against one another. As the delegates stepped into the street, one of them, from Queens, told a reporter, "O.K., now we're off the record." He nodded toward Ribustello, as a warning. "Do you know who he is? A Soprano. Do you know what that means?"

—*Raffi Khatchadourian*

GOOD FENCES DEPT.
NAYSAYER

Two Fridays ago, Lyda Green, the president of the Alaska state senate, awoke at about 6 A.M. to a call from one of her aides. "She started yelling," Green said last week, over the telephone from Wasilla, Alaska. "I said, 'I can't hear you. What are you saying?' She finally got it out: 'McCain has chosen Palin as his running mate!' I was just silent."

Since the Palin announcement, a number of intriguing critics of the Governor have gained notoriety. There's Anne Kilkenny, a voter registrar and housewife who observed Palin up close on the Wasilla city council in the nineteen-nineties. She wrote a long anti-Palin missive that coursed through the Internet last week with the speed of one of those viral e-mails tarring Obama. And there's Mudflats, the anonymous Alaskan blogger who has become a go-to source for Palin muckraking in the liberal blogosphere.

But in the competitive world of Alaskan Palin critics Green stands apart. She's sixty-nine years old, a conservative Republican who represents Palin's home town. Palin supported Green when she first ran for the state senate. Unlike some partisan critics, when Green speaks ill of Palin she sounds more like a disappointed grandmother than a political hit woman. Her official biography lists her interests as "family, reading, bridge, piano, traveling, tennis," and on the morning of the Palin announcement she was sleeping in past six only because she had been up late sewing.

A reporter from the Anchorage *Daily News* called later that Friday morning, and Green didn't think twice about rendering her judgment on Palin. "She's not prepared to be governor," she said, in comments soon posted on the paper's Web site. "How can she be prepared to be vice president or president? Look at what she's done to this state. What would she do to the nation?"

Green and Palin were friends and ideological allies throughout the nineties. "If you had looked at our résumés, as far as being pro-life, pro-N.R.A., pro-family, pro-parental control, saving taxpayer dollars, keeping government out of our lives, we would have been identical," she said. She traces the chill in their relationship to her decision not to endorse Palin in her 2006 gubernatorial primary. (She stayed neutral.) As governor, Green says, Palin, unlike her predecessors—Democrats and Republicans—has ignored leaders in the legislature and turned every policy disagreement, whether a dispute over a tax on studded tires or a recent debate on rebate checks, into a personal vendetta. "That became her style: in the media implying a negative picture of the legislature," Green said.

The animosity became public last January, when Palin turned up on an Anchorage shock-jock radio program, "The Bob and Mark Show." Bob Lester said that he knew Palin believed Green was "a bitch" and "a cancer." Palin laughed at the comments. "Sarah can be heard in the background tittering, hee-heeing," Green said, "never saying, 'That's not appropriate, let's not talk like that, let's change the subject,' or anything." Green was devastated. "I worked through it," she said. "The difficult thing about it was when my children read about it online. They were dumbfounded, because they had known Sarah. I had breast cancer in '97 and had a radical mastectomy. Sarah certainly knew I had breast cancer, because she sent me flowers when I was ill."

Green insists that she's not the only Republican who is stunned by McCain's decision; she's just the most vocal about it. Privately, she says, many other Alaskans are as critical as she is. That's not how it looked down on the floor among her state's delegates the night that Palin spoke in St. Paul. The Alaskans, who earlier in the week had undergone media training to learn how to stay positive when talking to reporters about Palin, raised "Palin Power" signs and chanted "Drop the puck!" (something to do with hockey). When Palin walked onstage, they yelled, "We love you!" Asked what he thought of Palin's speech, Lyda Green's husband, Curtis, said that he and his wife didn't see it. "No, can't stand to watch her," he said. Lyda was more diplomatic. "I had a previous engagement," she said. "I was watching the U.S. Open."

—*Ryan Lizza*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
EQUAL BEFORE MAMMON

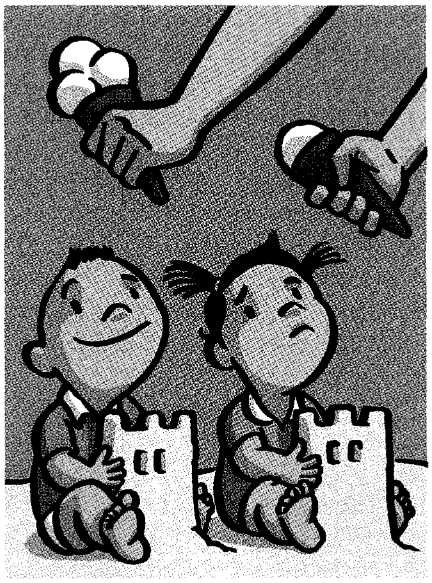
She was an ordinary middle-class mom who, despite fierce criticism, succeeded in a male-dominated profession. She challenged the local establishment and became a national figure, earning herself a spot as a featured speaker at her party's recent Convention. But she wasn't the governor of Alaska. She was a woman named Lilly Ledbetter, a former middle manager at a Goodyear plant in Alabama, who appeared at the Democratic Convention to give a human face to the slogan "Equal pay for equal work."

Ledbetter's unlikely journey to center stage began in the late nineteen-nineties, when she received an anonymous note revealing the salaries of her fellow-managers, all of whom were men. Although Ledbetter did the same job as her colleagues, and had more seniority than some of them, they were all being paid considerably more than she was. Ledbetter sued, under the Civil Rights Act, and proved that her lower pay was the result of discrimination early in her career, the effects of which had never been remedied. But victory was short-lived; the verdict was overturned on appeal, and then the Supreme Court ruled against her. The Court did not deny that Ledbetter had been discriminated against. However, according to the Civil Rights Act, Ledbetter's lawsuit had to be filed within a hundred and eighty days, and the Court ruled that the clock started ticking with the first act of discrimination, almost two decades before Ledbetter found out what was going on.

Ledbetter was out of luck. But the Court did leave open a possibility for others like her: if Congress wanted a more realistic time frame for lawsuits, all it had to do was change the law. And so, acting with surprising dispatch, that's precisely what Congress tried to do. Last year, the House passed a bill, named after Ledbetter, that essentially did away with the statute of limitations on pay discrimination, and the Senate was set to do the same until Republicans filibustered it to death.

Protecting workers from discrimination is a fairly uncontroversial idea. So opponents of the bill, who include John McCain, insisted that, while they're in favor of equal pay, the new law would unleash a flood of frivolous litigation. That's a familiar excuse, and in this case a threadbare one. There would likely be more lawsuits if the bill was passed—the point, after all, was to allow more people to sue—but there was no reason to expect a deluge, since, before the Court's decision, it's probable that most potential litigants had assumed a less stringent interpretation of the time limit anyway. And giving workers more time to sue makes sense, because pay discrimination usually takes a while to become evident, and, insofar as raises and bonuses are based on initial salaries, its effects never go away.

Other opponents of the bill depict it as a stalking horse for the idea of "comparable worth" (also known as "pay equity"), which would require the government to shrink the current gender wage gap by insuring that workers in female-dominated professions receive pay similar to that of workers in male-dominated professions, as long as they're doing work of "similar value." To have the government, rather than the market, set wages and decide what kinds of work are comparable to others is indeed a poor idea. But the Lilly Ledbetter bill has nothing to do with comparable worth. It's about closing a loophole that has enabled employers to get away with active discrimination. Comparable worth would require the government to enforce equal pay for different jobs. But Ledbetter just wanted what she was entitled to—equal pay for the same job.

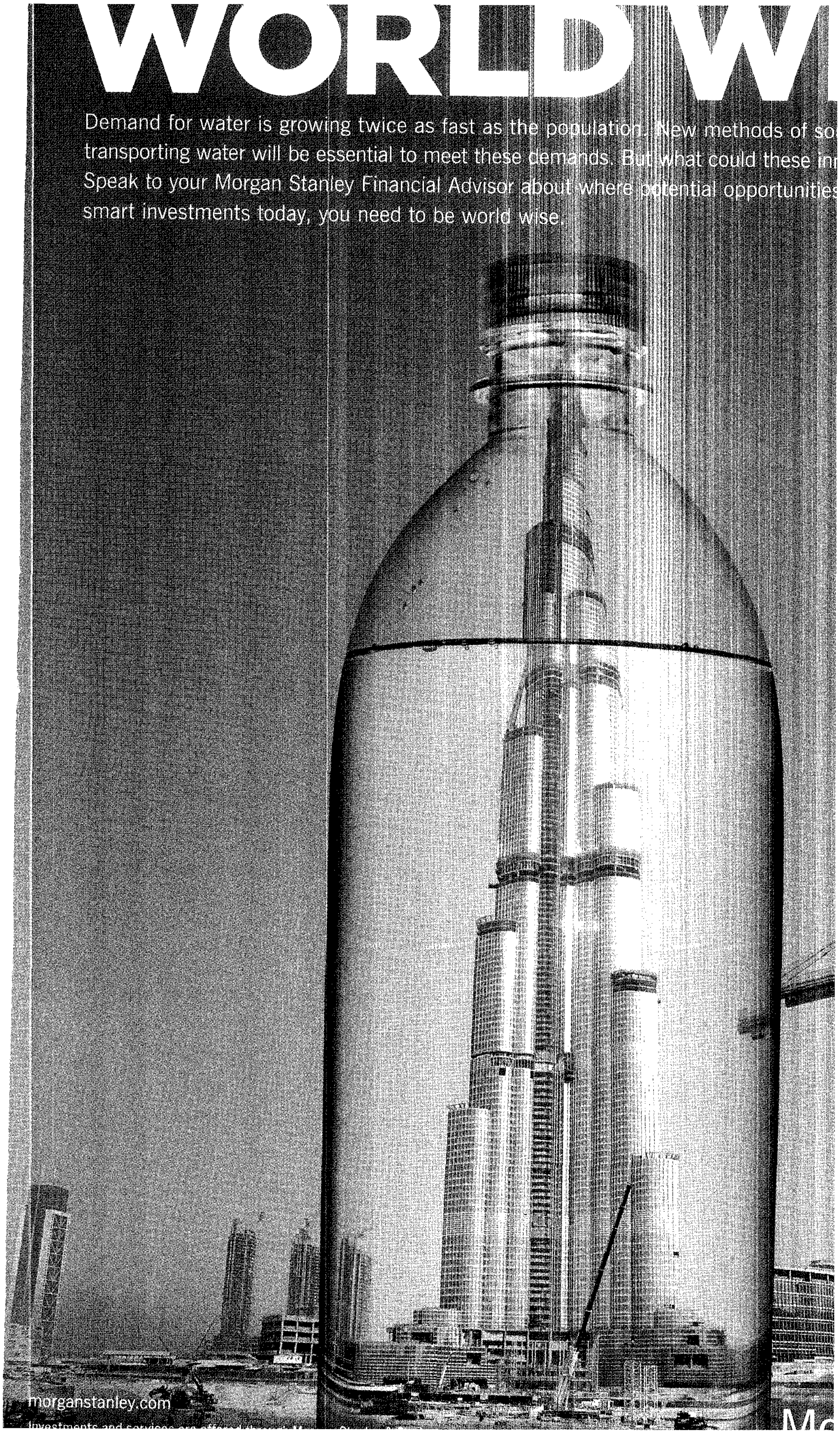


CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Does the Ledbetter bill matter? It's true that active discrimination is rarer these days than it once was. But, contrary to what much economic work would predict, racial and sex discrimination is still a powerful force in the job market. Decades ago, the economist Gary Becker showed that "taste-based" discrimination (pure prejudice) could not survive in a truly competitive talent market, because unprejudiced companies would outperform prejudiced ones by hiring smart women and minorities. Yet the introduction of blind auditions at major symphony orchestras, starting in the seventies, has increased by fifty per cent the likelihood of female performers' advancing—a clear sign that, for decades, orchestras had made bad talent decisions because of their prejudice without being punished. More striking, recent work by Kerwin Charles and Jonathan Guryan, of the University of Chicago, shows that, under certain reasonable conditions, market competition will not necessarily eradicate discrimination. That may be why, they suggest, the gap between black and white wages is widest in the most prejudiced parts of the U.S.—precisely what you'd expect if businessmen could discriminate and get away with it.

Of course, just because the market can't prevent discrimination doesn't mean the government should. And so there is a principled argument against the Ledbetter bill: namely, that Lilly Ledbetter was an adult; that if she didn't think she was being paid fairly she was free to ask for more money or to leave; and that government interference with the idea of what constitutes fair pay is likely to cause more problems than it's worth. Unlike the current opposition to the bill, this is an honest position to take. But it's also, for good reasons, a profoundly unpopular one, which is why few Republicans have voiced it. Instead, opponents of the bill have acted like McCain, proclaiming their support for fair pay while doing their best to insure that workers have a hard time getting it. Maybe it's time for them to give Americans some straight talk and unveil a new slogan: "Unequal pay for equal work." It may not be catchy, but at least it's honest.

—*James Surowiecki*



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LETTER FROM BEIJING

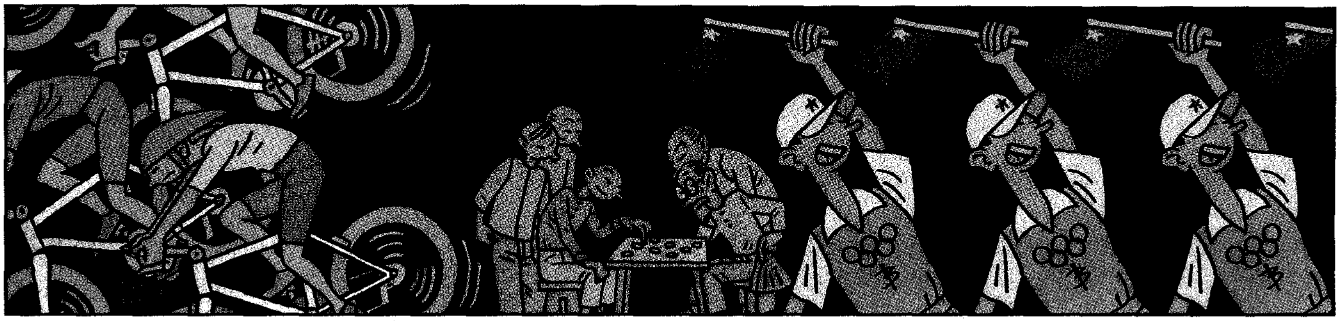
THE HOME TEAM

How the Chinese experienced the Olympics.

BY PETER HESSLER

The night before the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Olympics, Wei Ziqi joined two of his neighbors on the local barricade. It consisted of a rope stretched taut across the road, and the attendants had been given wooden paddles that read "Stop!" in both Chinese and English. Two of the neighbors wore blue-and-white polo shirts with the "Beijing 2008" logo across the chest. Sancha, their village, is a ninety-minute drive from the capital, and marks a point where the Great Wall winds through the mountains of northern China. At the barricade there was also a piece of paper with a message in English: "Please help us to protect the Great Wall. This section of the Great Wall is not open to the public."

According to the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, or BOCOG, there were more than 1.7 million citizen volunteers in the region. The most visible ones were stationed at Olympic events and at places like the airport and downtown intersections, which were usually staffed by high-school and college students who spoke some English. These urban volunteers had been outfitted by Adidas, an official Olympic sponsor; the company provided gray trousers, new running shoes, and bright-blue shirts made of a high-tech material called ClimaLite. But the ClimaLite and the corporate sponsorship disappeared in the countryside. That was one way to gauge distance—north of the capital, the urban development thinned out, and along the way the volunteers' gear became more ragged. The ClimaLite was replaced by cheap cotton; the running shoes were no longer standard issue; the Adidas logo was nowhere to be seen. Many peasants wore only a red armband, because they were saving the new shirt for something more important than the Olympics.



The Chinese take big events in stride; this was how they survived Mao, and weathered disasters like the Sichuan earthquake.

And yet the rural volunteers were diligent. Sancha's population is less than two hundred, but the village had enlisted thirty residents to staff the barrier around the clock. Earlier that afternoon, when Wei Ziqi drove me through the countryside to the village, we were stopped at two other checkpoints. We also passed a crumbling Ming-dynasty tower manned by a lonely sentinel wearing a green armband that read "Great Wall Groundskeeper." In Bohai township, six miles from the village, I registered with the police. For the Olympic period, the authorities had banned foreigners from spending a night in this part of the countryside, but they made an exception because I had rented a house in Sancha since 2001. "Just don't hike up to the Great Wall," the cop warned me. He said that the big tourist sites were open, but everything else was off limits. On his desk was a stack of police manuals entitled "The Terrorist Prevention Handbook." While we chatted, I opened one to a random chapter: "What to Do if There's a Terrorist Attack in a Karaoke Parlor."

For China, 2008 had been the most traumatic year since 1989, when the Tiananmen Square massacre occurred. In March, there had been riots in Tibet, followed by a brutal crackdown by the authorities. Overseas, human-rights demonstrators disrupted the Olympic-torch relay, leading to an angry nationalist backlash in China. In May, a powerful earthquake in Sichuan province killed more than sixty thousand people. Recently, there had been a fatal attack on Chinese military police in Xinjiang, a region in the far west where much of the native Muslim population resents China's rule. All these events had contributed to the stress of the Olympic year, but I didn't understand the concern about the Great Wall. "They're worried about foreigners, people who might want Tibet independence," Wei Ziqi told me. "They don't want them to go up to the Great Wall with a sign or something."

It was fear of a photo op—that somebody would unfurl a political banner and take a picture atop China's most distinctive structure. The government also worried that a foreigner might hike in a remote area and get injured, creating bad press. For this, the authorities had mobilized more than five thousand people in the region, but labor is plentiful in rural China. And these volunteers were getting paid—another difference from the city, where patriotic students were willing to donate their time to the Motherland's Olympic effort. Peasants were too practical for that; in addition to the free shirt, each rural volunteer received five hundred yuan a month, about seventy-three dollars. In Sancha, where the average resident earned about a thousand dollars per year, it was good money.

For Wei Ziqi, though, the Olympics didn't represent a windfall. He and his wife ran one of the few businesses in the

JOOST SWARTE

village, a small restaurant and guesthouse, and they missed the Chinese city dwellers who usually drove out on weekends. Since July 20th, the government had restricted the use of private cars, in an attempt to improve the capital's notorious air pollution. The system was regulated through license-plate numbers: cars with plates ending in even digits could be used only on even-numbered days, and the odds were limited to odd days. This effectively ended overnight trips—if anybody drove to the village and stayed past midnight, he was stuck there for another day.

I never heard Wei Ziqi complain about the Olympics; nor did he show any animosity toward the hordes of "Free Tibet" protesters who were supposedly threatening the Great Wall. For a middle- or upper-class Beijing resident, the reaction would have been more emotional—such people were proud of hosting the Games, and many Chinese had been upset by the disruptions of the torch relay. But rural folks knew the limits of what they could control, and there was a distinct detachment from outside affairs, even those which affected the village. No adults in Sancha planned to attend any Olympic festivities. When I asked Wei Ziqi if he and his family would accompany me to some events, he said, "I don't want to go."

"Why not?"

"We're not supposed to go into the city," he said. "They don't want a lot of people there right now."

I assured him that spectators with tickets were welcome at the Games.

"It's not necessary," he said. "We can watch it on television."

The night before the opening ceremonies, I joined him at the barricade with the other villagers. Wei Ziqi's shift was 9 P.M. to 6 A.M. Only two cars passed through, both of them dropping off locals. Afterward, the vehicles turned around to hustle back to the city, because they had odd-numbered plates. It was like "Cinderella"—nobody lingered on the road after the clock struck midnight.

One barricade volunteer was a middle-aged man named Gao Yongfu. "President Bush just arrived," he announced, fiddling with a small radio. "He's in Beijing now. Putin is coming, too." He continued, "An American company has the rights for Olympics television. They have the rights for the whole world! Even if China wants to broadcast the Games, it has to go through that American company."

The third volunteer, a woman named Xue Jinlian, didn't think that that sounded right. "They can't control what China broadcasts," she said.

"Yes, they can."

"I don't think so. Not in China's own country!" Xue was silent for a while, and then said, "Chinese people are naturally smart. Their problem is they don't have enough money. You look at America, and a lot of the top scientists are Chinese. There's a lot of smart people here, but if there's not enough money they leave."

Village conversations had a way of veering off suddenly, like a hawk that catches some invisible air current, but inevitably they returned to settle on certain topics: food, weather, money. Gao brought us back to the weather—the air was heavy, but he said that the government wouldn't let it rain the following night. "They can make it rain somewhere else instead," he said. "I don't know how it works, but it uses high technology."

The villagers were still discussing the weather a little before midnight, when I walked back to my house and went to bed. Later, I heard that the first car of August 8th had come through the barricade at around 2 A.M. The license ended with the number two—a Beijing motorist determined to make the most of his twenty-four hours. That same day, the government would fire more than a thousand silver-iodide-laced rockets into the sky, insuring perfect dryness for the opening ceremonies. At 5 A.M., jet lag woke me up, and I wandered back down the road. Behind the barricade, Wei Ziqi dozed in the passenger seat of his car, and morning light shone on the Jundu Mountains, and nothing about the peaceful scene suggested that this day was different from any other.

Earlier that week, I had arrived on United Flight No. 889, San Francisco to Beijing. The airline was a sponsor of the U.S. Olympic team, and the gate in San Francisco had a pre-race feel: the solidarity of the starting line, that moment before the pack breaks into its inevitable divisions. The U.S. women's softball team was there, as were the synchronized swimmers. The American track cyclists had gathered near the windows that overlooked the tarmac. Two athletes from Belize wore matching tracksuits. There was

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a National Olympic Committee member from Venezuela, an elderly man who wore a brown bow tie and carried a cane. The television people were easy to pick out—tall blond women with BlackBerrys and burnished skin. Jim Gray, a prominent sports announcer who was covering the Olympics for NBC, strode up and down the terminal, avoiding eye contact with anybody who recognized him.

Once boarding began, the solidarity dissolved, as if this race had started fast. The TV folks vanished into first class and business class, along with the Venezuelan committee member. The pair from Belize sat quietly in economy. Most of the American athletes were in economy plus. The softball team sat along the left wing, and the cyclists and the synchronized swimmers took the right; if it wasn't perfect ballast, it was close. "Everybody here at United would like to welcome all the athletes," the pilot announced on the intercom, after takeoff. Later, he spoke again. "I want to pass on a message from the women's softball team," he said. "They want to say, 'Good luck to the men in tights!' "

There was no rejoinder from the cyclists. They wore white compression tights beneath their T-shirts and warm-ups, and periodically each athlete stood up and took a lap through the aisles, shaking out his legs. That was the United 889 velodrome: walk to the bathroom, turn at the exit row, duck past the softball mockery, and head back toward Belize. On one of these circuits, I interrupted Michael Friedman, who was scheduled to compete in men's track cycling in two weeks. He was a friendly twenty-five-year-old with reddish hair and a barrel chest. "It's for the blood clots," he explained, when I asked about the compression tights and the pacing. "We're not supposed to sit down for too long."

The flight took more than twelve hours, and at Beijing airport's Terminal 3 we were greeted by smiling volunteers wearing ClimaLite. There were also representatives from United Airlines, who distributed information sheets to all American athletes. Among other matters, they warned the Olympians about the volunteers:

> We ask that you stay with the group and our staff as we've experienced instances where BOCOG volunteers (in blue uniform) with the intention to assist has directed part of our groups off on their own.

Other bullet-point instructions had a slightly ominous tone:

> • Please note that Immigration officers normally will not provide an explanation when they take your passport and OIAC card away.

The athletes had fallen silent, and they gathered in a tight cluster, like cattle on the open range before a storm. Four cyclists wore black face masks, which covered the nose and mouth, and had the sharp lines of armored visors. Michael Friedman said that the masks had been issued by the team, in case the pollution in Beijing was bad. "They told us we should do this," he said. He looked a little sheepish; none of the athletes from other sports wore masks. But then they hadn't used the compression tights, either. "I figure, no reason to take any risks," Friedman told me with a shrug.

The cyclists wore their masks through baggage claim and customs. At the exit, television cameras were waiting, and the images created a brief uproar after they appeared. Within a day, the athletes had issued an apology, through the United States Olympic Committee. It read, in part, "Our decision was not intended to insult BOCOG or countless others who have put forth a tremendous amount of effort to improve the air quality in Beijing." The day that I sat on the village barricade, the apology made the front-page headlines of the *China Daily:*

> TORCH TIME IN TOWN AS
> FEVER RISES
>
> PUTIN PRAISES PREPARATIONS
>
> US CYCLISTS SORRY FOR
> WEARING MASKS.

The men's road-cycling final was the day after the opening ceremonies, and it was one of the few events that didn't require a ticket. The race began downtown, winding through the city before heading north to the Great Wall. Down the street from the Lama Temple, white metal barricades had been erected along the sidewalks. The ClimaLite crew was there, stationed at intervals of thirty feet, and there were also local volunteers in "Capital Public Order Worker" T-shirts. Plainclothes cops worked the crowd. In China, undercover officials have a distinct look: well-built men in their thirties or forties, dressed in button-down shirts, dark trousers, and cheap leather loafers. They almost always have crewcuts. At the cycling race, they had been issued little Chinese flags in a half-hearted attempt at cover, but they didn't wave them like everybody else. They held the flags beside their hips, like weapons at the ready.

On the sidewalk, two men played the game of Chinese chess known as *xiangqi.* They sat on stools around a wooden board, and they paid no attention to the growing mob of people. If they noticed the plainclothes men, they gave no sign—Beijing residents had learned long ago to take surveillance in stride. And this was the chess players' turf: in the shade of a scholar tree, in front of the Badaling Leather Shoe Shop. Zhang Yonglin, one of the players, owned the shop. His opponent was a retired auto mechanic named Zhang Youzhi. The players were unrelated, and locals referred to them as Little Zhang and Old Zhang. Forty minutes before the start of the cycling race, a volunteer told them to leave.

"Wait until we finish this game," Old Zhang said.

He carried a fan inscribed with gold calligraphy, and he gestured with it, a brief swipe that indicated that the game wouldn't last long. The volunteer was lower caste—no ClimaLite—and she shrugged and left the men alone. A few minutes later, an official BOCOG volunteer walked over. "You need to move," he said. "There's going to be a bicycle race here."

"We know that," Old Zhang said. "We're just going to finish the game."

This time, the flip of the fan was more dismissive. The young volunteer seemed reluctant to challenge this elderly man, and so the game continued. By now, seven people had gathered to watch, and one of them told me that Old Zhang was the best player in the neighborhood. In China, chess is a sport: the Chinese Xiangqi Association is administered by the All-China Sports Federation, just like the Chinese Cycling Association and the Chinese Basketball Association. The federation also handles bridge, Go, darts, and the Chinese Tug-of-War Association. If this seems a muddled view of athletics, then it helps to think of the All-China Sports Federation as being concerned with competitive pastimes, broadly speaking. Beneath this umbrella organization, some associations exist with the primary goal of competing against foreigners at the Olympics. This is why the Chinese excel at obscure sports, and why so many of their 2008 gold medals were gained in events that average citizens almost never encounter: archery (one gold), sailing (one), shooting (five), weight lifting (eight). They won a gold in canoeing, a form of water transport as Chinese as the tomahawk. It's a triumph of bureaucracy, and it shouldn't surprise anybody. If a nation can organize 1.7 million volunteers, from Tiananmen Square to the Great Wall, all of them outfitted according to subtle distinctions of class and status, then surely it should be possible to find and train one woman capable of winning the RS:X windsurfing gold. (Her name is Yin Jian.)

But, like the concept of bureaucracy, chess had a presence in China long before medal counts. And Chinese chess truly feels like a sport, as does chess-watching. It even has set positions. There's always at least one observer who gives advice before a move is made. Another onlooker waits until the move is finished before he offers his comments. This is the pairs event for spectators—the coach and the critic—and you would expect it to drive players to violence. But all aggression is directed at the board. Near the Lama Temple, Old Zhang and Little Zhang slammed the wooden pieces as hard as they could with every move.

Thwack!

"I'm giving your horse something to eat!"

Thwack!

"I need a gate! I need a gate!"

"Right, right! That's the right move!"

Thwack!

"I'm giving it to you cheap!"

With twenty-four minutes left until the cycling, and after the players had been asked to leave on three separate occasions, Little Zhang finally conceded the match. He did this Beijing style: he dumped the pieces on the ground and howled, "Old Zhang plays black!" Then they immediately began another game. By now, they had an audience of fifteen people, including four security volunteers in uniform. Periodically, a plainclothes man wandered over, flag at the hip, to watch for a few minutes.

As Old Zhang played, he used his fan like a master. He folded it when thinking; after a move, he always unfurled it with a flourish. Near the end of the game, when it became clear that he had left himself vulnerable, the fan began to move jerkily, as if in irritation; but still the old man said nothing. At last, he conceded with a smile. There were fewer than ten minutes left when the men finally put away the board.

Now the crowd pressed toward the barricades, and for a long time the road was empty. "They're coming!" somebody finally said.

"Cars are coming!"

"They're all Volkswagens," somebody else observed. The advance vehicles were black VW sedans with tinted windows. Then came a police motorcycle and police car, followed by a truck with a big platform that swivelled like a gun.

"That's the television camera!"

Two lead cyclists whizzed past, a Chilean and a Bolivian. Half a minute later, the entire pack went by so fast that the crowd could hardly react. Nobody had any idea who was in front; the uniforms weren't printed in Chinese; the cyclists' faces were a blur. For an instant, there was stunned silence, and then everybody saw the long line of support cars and cheered.

"Why do they have the bikes on top?"

"That's for fixing them."

"Each one has a flag—look!"

"Those aren't Volkswagens, though."

"They're Skodas, I think."

"Skodas, definitely."

"There's an ambulance!"

They gave the last-place ambulance a good sendoff. For a few minutes, the street was empty, and then it was as if another race had begun. The leader was a battered bicycle cart carrying scraps of wood. A normal bike followed, then a Honda cab. A truck full of bottled water. A parade of odd-numbered plates: 1, 7, 5, 9. The crowd dispersed; volunteers dismantled barricades; Old Zhang shuffled off to lunch. "It was O.K.," he said, referring to the bicycle race. Earlier, he had shown me his fan's calligraphy, which consisted of a poem entitled "Do Not Get Angry."

"It reminds me to stay calm when playing chess," he said. The opening verses read:

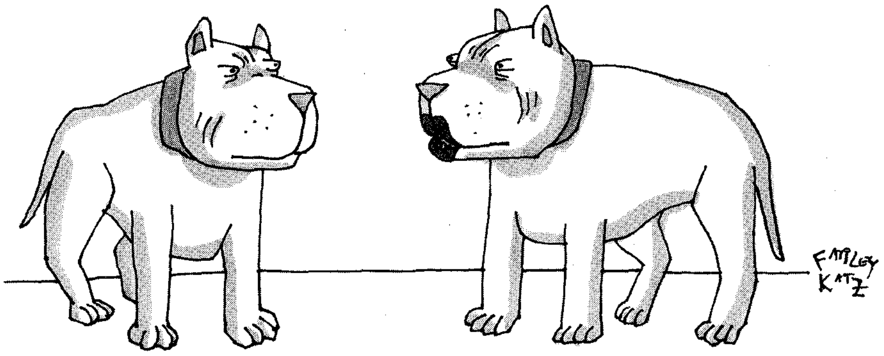
> Life is just like a play, and we are here
> only because of destiny
> It's not easy to be together until we're
> old, so why not cherish it?

When I told Wei Jia that I had an extra ticket to the fencing competition, he asked me which kind. Wei Jia was Wei Ziqi's eleven-year-old son, a native of rural Sancha. "There's *peijian*, *zhongjian*, and *huajian*," he said matter-of-factly—sabre, épée, and foil. "The swords have different sizes and shapes."

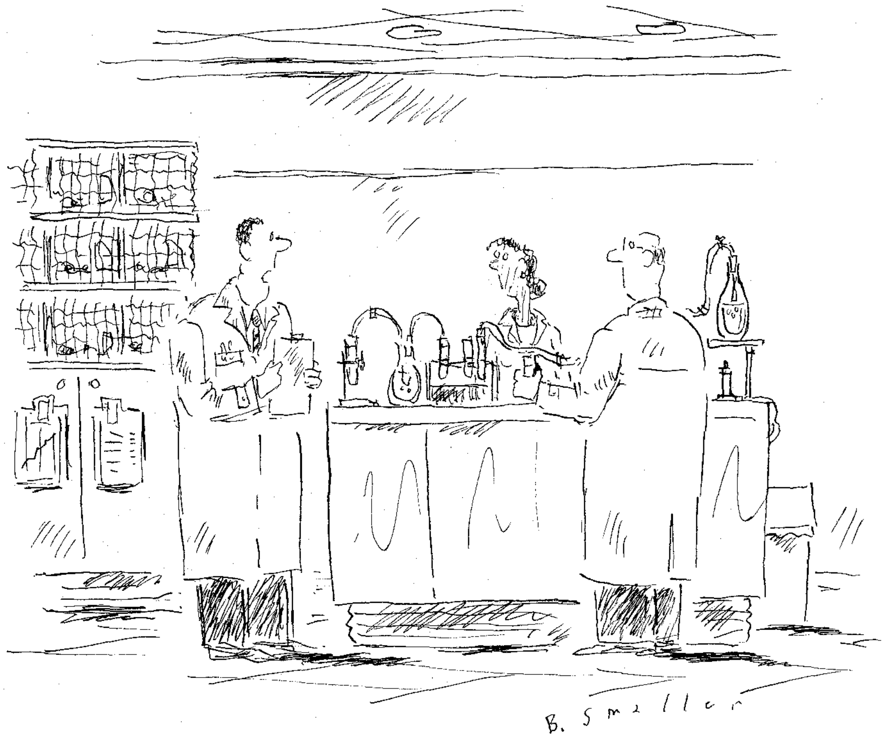
Like all elementary-school children in the greater Beijing region, Wei Jia had been issued a textbook called "The Primary School Olympic Reader." It began in Olympia ("The grass is green and the flowers fragrant"), descended to cartoons of naked Greeks wrestling, and continued to Baron de Coubertin. One section featured the Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi; another was devoted to John Akhwari, a Tanzanian marathoner who, in 1968, showed great sportsmanship in finishing last. The chapter about Liu Xiang, China's great hurdler, made you wish that the book had been issued with some wood to knock:

> Liu Xiang is healthy, and while training and racing he rarely gets injured, which is hard for an athlete.

It was partly Wei Jia's interest that persuaded his father to accept my offer to at-



"There's more than one way to catch a mailman."



"It's fine to discover cures, but, remember, chronic conditions are our bread and butter."

• •

tend some events. The first one was rowing, and Wei Ziqi called the night before with a question about raincoats. "Do they give them out free?" he asked.

"I don't think so," I said. "Why would they do that?"

"I was watching on TV," he said. "Everybody in the stands has the same color raincoat."

Somehow, despite hours of watching the coverage, I had missed that detail. I said that the coats were probably being sold at venues, but Wei Ziqi was shrewder. "You're not allowed to use umbrellas, right?"

This was true, because of security concerns.

"Well, if they don't let people use umbrellas," he said, "then maybe they give out raincoats."

I didn't quite understand the logic, but the following day, after we passed through security at the Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park, about twenty miles outside Beijing, the first thing we saw was a woman handing out cheap plastic ponchos. It was like that at every event—the organizers knew their crowd. The Chinese love freebies, and there were always volunteers distributing something: plastic flags, cheap cardboard binoculars, fans with the McDonald's logo. They gave out pamphlets that described the rules of various sports and told the audience how to behave. (At volleyball: "Applauding is welcome at appropriate times during the match. Booing and jeering is not allowed.") Concessions were unbelievably low. Instant noodles, which Chinese like to eat dry, were thirty cents. A can of cold beer cost less than seventy-five cents. It was possible to show up at fencing at 10 A.M., spend four and a half bucks, and get a six-pack of Budweiser. But no Chinese person would ever do that. Few Chinese have spent much time at spectator sports, and there's no tradition of drinking at the ballpark. Most people buying beer seemed to be foreigners.

The Chinese were focussed, and they were intense. There was none of the looseness of the street; these people had paid for their tickets, and they knew that the opportunity wouldn't come again. They were often silent at the beginning of an event, almost on edge as they tried to figure out the action; it got loud later, especially after Chinese athletes appeared. At the preliminaries of men's sabre, during the first hour, a fistfight broke out three rows ahead of where Wei Jia and I were sitting. It was like a play within a play: in the background, Renzo Agresta, of Brazil, was slashing at Luigi Tarantino, of Italy, and then two Chinese men stood up and started whaling at each other. They appeared to be middle class; one was accompanied by his child. In China, public disagreements are common, and typically they consist of a lot of shouting that goes nowhere. But at fencing there was no prelude and no encore, just ten seconds of flailing. By the time the ClimaLite showed up, nobody was talking, and the volunteer couldn't figure out what had happened. The men simply sat down and shut up, terrified of getting kicked out. The most I learned from neighbors was that the dispute had started over sight lines.

The woman next to me was named Wang Meng, and she was a graduate student in agriculture. She had received her ticket from a friend, who bought it online more than a year earlier. At face value, it cost four dollars and forty cents; when I asked Wang if she would have resold it for three hundred dollars, she shook her head. "This is my only chance to see something at the Olympics," she said. She spent the first half hour talking in hushed tones with her neighbors, trying to determine what it meant when a fencer's helmet lit up.

In the past, I had disliked attending athletic events in China, because the nationalism is usually so narrow-minded. Few people care about the sport itself; victory is all that matters, and there's little joy in the experience. But at the Olympics I sensed something different. Cao Chunmei, Wei Jia's mother, talked mostly about how the events made her feel. "It's peaceful," she said at synchronized diving, whereas wrestling made her nervous. She said that the Bird's Nest—Beijing National Stadium—was *luan*, "chaotic." "That's the way it should be," she said. "A real nest is like that." Her favorite was the National Aquatic Center, the Water Cube. When I commented that the patterned exterior resembled bubbles, she disagreed: "Those are too big to be bubbles." She liked the place because it gave her a clean feeling.

The brand-new rowing park, in Shunyi, also initially made her nervous, because she couldn't swim and disliked boats. Shunyi is the kind of small city that's common in the suburbs of sprawling Chinese municipalities, where many residents are peasants on their way to becoming something else. The local officials were proud to host rowing, canoeing, and kayaking. They had hung banners all around town that said "Culture is in Shunyi / The Olympics are in Shunyi."

There was a brief rainburst and the family sat happily in their free ponchos. Rural people travel light—none of the Weis had brought anything with them, not even Wei Jia, who planned to stay with me in the city to see more of the Games. After the event, we said goodbye to his parents and got in a cab. I asked the driver to recommend a restaurant. "The Golden Million is good," he said.

The Golden Million's mirrored entrance was decorated with four hundred and ninety-three bottles of Old Matisse Scotch. At the center of the restaurant was an enormous tank filled with a dozen sharks, two soft-shelled turtles, and one woman dressed as a mermaid. In addition to a long mono-fin, she wore a bikini top, a face mask, and a nose clip. A sign said "THE CAPITAL'S TOP MERMAID SHOW!" The tank was circular, and the woman swam laps with the sharks and the turtles. One advantage of travelling with Wei Jia was that he often came up with the questions that I was too stunned to ask.

"Why is that lady in the water?" he said, looking concerned, when the waitress came to our table.

"It's a type of performance," she said.

"Why don't the sharks bite her?"

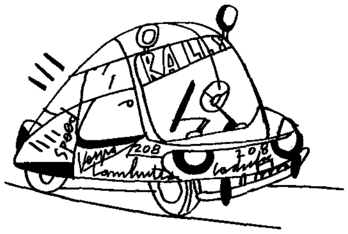
"Because they're full," she said, smiling reassuringly. "If you feed them, they don't bite people."

Later, Wei Ziqi told me that at the rowing complex, after I got in the taxi with Wei Jia, the next cabbie had refused to take him and his wife. There was a long line of cars, but the drivers had been instructed to take foreigners only: Chinese spectators had to wait for the bus. Wei Ziqi laughed when he told the story; he didn't take it personally.

In February of 2001, when Beijing was bidding to host the Games, I had accompanied the I.O.C. inspection commission on its last tour of the capital. For more than three hours, our motorcade travelled through the city, visiting potential stadium sites; everywhere we went, the traffic lights turned green, as if by magic. Along our route, the façades of hundreds of buildings had been freshly painted in bright colors. According to government statistics, workers had brushed up twenty-six million square metres, which meant that they had painted an area nearly half as big as Manhattan.

At that time, even dissidents spoke out in favor of the bid, hoping that the Olympics would bring political change. That possibility was reportedly a factor in the I.O.C.'s decision; many members believed that the 1988 Games, in Seoul, had helped to reform South Korea. "What the hell is the Party going to do?" an American who had served as an I.O.C. adviser told me, back in 2001. "It's going to be really hard to have a Stalinist Party and open the Olympic Games." Liu Jingmin, Beijing's vice-mayor, told me that the organizers had considered but finally rejected the slogan "Great Wall, Great Olympics." Seven years later, it was clear that the Communist Party could indeed open the Games, and the decision regarding the slogan seemed wise, given that there were now some five thousand peasants guarding the structure against foreigners.

Ever since Deng Xiaoping, China had become steadily more receptive to the outside world, but there was still a distinct element of fear and insecurity. The Olympics undoubtedly helped to promote openness, but the Games didn't initiate a political transformation, just as they didn't change the basic outlook of most people. Long ago, the Chinese had learned to take big events in stride; this was how they survived Mao, and how they weathered disasters like the Sichuan earthquake. And such fortitude was evident throughout the Games, although you had to know where to look. You could see it in the calmness of the divers and the toughness of the weight lifters; it was obvious in the discipline of the gymnasts. Most Chinese athletes come from poor rural areas where children are recruited into sports schools. Sancha was already too prosperous for that—no village kids in recent memory had attended a sports school, and Wei Ziqi told me that he wouldn't want his son to take such a route. But other places had fewer options, and parents were satisfied to have their children enter the well-structured bureaucracy of the sports system.



The peasants had also left their mark on the facilities, at least indirectly. When I reread the promotional materials that BOCOG had given me at the time of the bid, they seemed almost modest in comparison with what was eventually built. In 2001, the government promised six subway lines spanning a hundred and forty kilometres; they ended up with eight lines of two hundred kilometres. The sketches of proposed arenas looked blocky and bland and utilitarian. There was no Bird's Nest, no Water Cube, nothing of distinction. But since then the economy had boomed, driven by the continued migration of people from the countryside, who also provided the labor for the elaborate construction—it was more than just paint this time. In a sense, China had reached the perfect stage for hosting the Games: workers were cheap, political accountability was minimal, and the rising middle and upper classes could attend and take pride in the competition. They were the ones who responded most deeply to the Olympics—crowd energy came largely from the young and the affluent. In the stands, it was easy to forget that most Chinese are still country people.

I liked to wander the distant corners of the arenas. Often the worst seats had been given away: at men's sabre, in the most remote section, a hundred and fifty Beijing Forestry Bureau workers sat with thunder sticks in hand, looking slightly dazed. At the preliminaries for Greco-Roman wrestling, there was a group of schoolchildren from Changping, a city outside Beijing. Their teacher stood up to make an announcement: the father of a competitor was sitting right behind them!

The man was in the last row. His name was Chang Aimei, and he was fifty-two, but he looked at least a decade older. He had dark skin and sun-wrinkled eyes, and he carried a farmworker's white sweat towel. In his lap he clutched all of the day's freebies: a Chinese flag, a flag with the Olympic mascot, an English guide to the Games. He also had a Chinese pamphlet with instructions on how to behave at Greco-Roman wrestling: "Spectators are encouraged to greatly applaud wrestlers who have demonstrated superior skills, or who have scored high points."

Chang Aimei's son was named Chang Yongxiang, and moments earlier he had defeated the reigning world champion, a Bulgarian. Chang Aimei was calling his wife; like many people from the countryside, he shouted every time he handled a cell phone. "Eldest Son just competed!" he yelled. "He won! What? I said he won!"

For the next hour, the phone rang repeatedly: relatives, friends, reporters from back home. The Changs came from Hanba, a village of fewer than three thousand people in Hebei province. They farmed wheat and corn on three-quarters of an acre of land, and their annual income was less than six hundred dollars. In the nineteen-eighties, one of Chang Aimei's nephews had been selected for a wrestling program, eventually becoming Chinese national champion. After that, Chang Aimei believed that there were opportunities for his boy, who was naturally big. At the age of thirteen, the son left home to enter the county sports school, and then moved to the provincial level and the national team. He now wrestled in the seventy-four-kilogram weight division. I asked Chang Aimei why he sat in the last row.

"The coaches don't want him to know I'm here," he said. "They don't want anything to disrupt him, so they told me to sit in the back."

It was only the second time he had seen his son wrestle. Three days earlier, local officials had told him that they had some tickets, and that he could have one. The others went to the village Party secretary and the director of the county sports bureau, both of whom had moved down to better seats. Chang Aimei's daughter waited outside the arena; she hadn't been able to get a ticket.

The cell phone rang again. "An American reporter is interviewing me!" he shouted. "Right now! American!"

Two years ago, his son had competed at a meet in Colorado Springs. "He said you Americans are really nice," Chang Aimei told me. "He said it's very clean there, too."

It was early in the day, and the athletes were working their way through the rounds. At the Olympics, Chinese men had never done better than bronze in wrestling; nobody had ever made the finals. In Chang Yongxiang's second match of the morning, he defeated a Peruvian to qualify for the semis. When it came time for his next competition, I made my way to the far corner of the arena. His father was still there, sitting alone.

Chang Yongxiang was matched against a Belarusan named Aleh Mikhalovich. The crowd had grown louder all morning, and now they chanted, "China, go! China, go!" The Belarusan threw Chang out of the ring almost immediately, scoring four points, and won the first period. But then Chang seemed to gather himself. He was stocky, with thick thighs and a square jaw. He had bristly black hair and after every clinch he shook his head like a bull. He evened the match with the second period. Now the spectators were on their feet; the school group from Changping screamed and banged their thunder sticks.

Behind them, Chang Aimei remained seated. His legs were crossed, as if he were relaxing after a day's labor, and his belongings were neatly stacked on his lap: towel, flags, pamphlets. He had not moved a muscle since the match began. His eyes were fixed on the distant mat, and he said nothing. But I could hear him breathing—steady, steady, steady. In the third period, the Belarusan took the initial point. Deeper now, deeper now. The match continued with Chang Yongxiang in the lower position; he escaped and scored a point. Inhale—almost a gasp. Another point, and then it was over, and the referee was raising Chang Yongxiang's arm.

Eventually, Chang lost to a Georgian, taking the silver medal. But on the day of the semifinal he left the ring triumphant, already the most successful Chinese Greco-Roman wrestler in history. At the top of the arena, safely out of sight, Chang Aimei still looked relaxed. He was silent until he took out the cell phone. "*Wei!*" he shouted. "He just won again!" ♦

Headline in the London Daily Telegraph.

AMPUTATED LIMB BATTLE
REACHES FINAL LEG

From its beginnings as an arms race.

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

THE LORD BOD

BY PAUL RUDNICK

> Lord's Gym, a 10,000 square foot fitness center . . . meshes prayer and push-ups. The gym offers classes including "Yogod," its take on yoga. . . . Spaghetti-strap tank tops and short shorts are not allowed. . . . Per Heistad, who travels often for business and is a self-described gym rat, said he did not feel entirely comfortable in other gyms anymore. "I don't need anything to lead me into temptation," Mr. Heistad said. "I can get there on my own." Merri Bush, 42, who is a member with her daughter, Christyna Askey, 21, said [that] . . . the two of them walk on the treadmill each morning while they read and discuss the Bible. Ms. Askey said, "It's cool to be able to do that and not have people say, 'What are you doing?' "
>
> —*The Times.*

Amen, Christyna. I'm Kristeena Steggs, and my mom and I also really like to combine working out and Scripture, because, as my mom always says, "Jesus was right, and Jesus was toned." Mom and I also run a Christian gift shop here in Orlando, where we sell stuffed animals whose paws can be Velcroed together in worship, and toilet paper imprinted with the names of the seven deadly sins and the celebrities who practice them most often. We used to go to a secular gym, which was, as my mom puts it, "hoo-ha central." The most popular spandex colors for obvious adulterers, she claimed, were electric orange, aqua, and something she called "my-kids-are-in-day-care-so-come-and-get-me" fleshtone. One morning, she glanced at a blonde in a skimpy unitard and commented, "That woman looks like a pair of panty hose packed with spermicide-flavored Jell-O."

As for the men at the gym, well, I tried not to look, but sometimes it was like a tsunami of Speedos bulging right at me. "You know what's inside those banana hammocks?" Mom would warn me. "I call 'em Satan's potatoes." Sometimes a man would come over and ask me if I needed help with my workout, and Mom would jump right in and say, "Sure, if we can help you get reborn in the Holy Spirit and stop adjusting your harvest medley." My mom said that she could always tell which of the guys were homosexuals, because "they're always friendly, but the minute you turn your back they're having sex with one of the machines. It's called Pilates."

For a while we tried to work out at home, using a series of instructional DVDs called "Abs, Buns, and Brimstone," which were hosted by a bodybuilder dressed as a sleeveless pastor, who said things like "You'll never get raptured with that big ol' butt!" and "When God looks at you, He says, 'Gee, I don't remember creating all that cellulite!' " Mom and I tried, but we missed the camaraderie of a gym, so we decided to open our own, in a strip mall, and we called our place Jesus Christ You're Fat. We painted the walls with colorful murals of Bible heroes exercising, like Bathsheba on the NordicTrack, and David and Goliath enjoying a jolly sit-up competition; for a chuckle, we pictured Job standing behind a woman using both a triceps machine and her cell phone.

Our opening day was incredibly fraught: would anyone show up? Our first customer was a pretty young woman who said that she'd recently moved to the area and was looking for a cheerful neighborhood spot where she could get fit. My mom cried, "O come all ye faithful!," until she noticed the name on the woman's registration form: Caitlynn Weinblatt. "I'm not sure this is a good match," my mom said. "Will you be comfortable in a spinning class when the instructor stares right at you and yells, 'Feel the burn—in Hell!'?" Caitlynn asked my mom if she knew of any exclusively Jewish gyms nearby, and Mom cracked, "Sure—there's a deli on the corner!" Even Caitlynn had to laugh, as I later told her attorney.

It took a few weeks, but soon business was booming. We now have a special sunup stretch session called "The Inquisition," and there's a Mommy-and-Me gymnastics class, where toddlers can learn which body parts are the most shameful. I myself teach a trademark program of devout aerobics called "Cardio-Chant," where the ladies lie face down on the floor and sob quietly to tapes of liturgical wailing; no one loses any weight, but we all feel purified.

Best of all, I met my future husband, Robert (Bobby) Bobberman, at our gym. He came in one day, took the tour, and then declared, "I like this place—which ones are the women?" I blushed and he turned to me and said, "I need to see a priest, because I've got a confession to make: when I look at you, my sweatpants rejoice." That was when my mom came over and asked Bobby what his intentions were, and he told her, "I'd like to play some racquetball, take some steam, and then help your daughter to see God."

"Oh, sweetheart," my mom whispered to me. "He's a keeper."

Bobby is now a co-owner of our gym, and he's also the personal trainer of my mom, my best friend, Erin, and my teenage brother, Esau. Every time I walk in on one of them with Bobby and ask what's going on, they always squeal, "We're praying!" Bobby also wants to franchise our operation, and we've been brainstorming about a celebrity-makeover ad campaign, something along the lines of those recent Jenny Craig spots. I've noticed that Queen Latifah, in her Jenny ads, never says how much she weighs but just announces that she's "Size Active." Maybe she could endorse our gyms by saying that she's "Size Sacred," or, as my mom suggested, "Size Whoever Pays Me." Bobby said that he was thinking more along the lines of Eva Longoria or Jennifer Aniston, and when I pointed out that they're both already in great shape he said, "Kristeena, you really need to work on your hips if you ever want to fit into that choir robe."

So here I am, a proud businesswoman, an adoring bride-to-be, and a blessed exercise addict. I hope that someday maybe Christyna Askey and her mom will drop by our facility, because Bobby keeps asking, "Is there really an angel out there named Merri Bush?" I bet that they would love our gym, because it's just what I imagine Heaven to look like: a clean white space filled with happy, in-shape Christians not looking at each other. ♦

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

A CLOUD OF SMOKE

The complicated death of a 9/11 hero.

BY JENNIFER KAHN

In January, 2006, shortly after James Zadroga died at his parents' house, in Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey, Dr. Gerard Breton received a call from the Ocean County Medical Examiner's Office. A retired hospital pathologist, Breton now conducts autopsies for the county on contract. Compared with its more violent neighbors—Newark, to the north, and Atlantic City, to the south—the central New Jersey shore tends to generate uncomplicated deaths: heart disease, liver failure, sunstroke. Zadroga's death, at the age of thirty-four, was different. Medical records showed that his health had been failing for almost five years, apparently owing to degenerative lung problems, which had forced him to go on sick leave from his job as a New York City homicide detective in 2002. He had spent the last year of his life dependent on a portable oxygen tank. After Zadroga died, on January 5, 2006, his father, Joe, requested an autopsy.

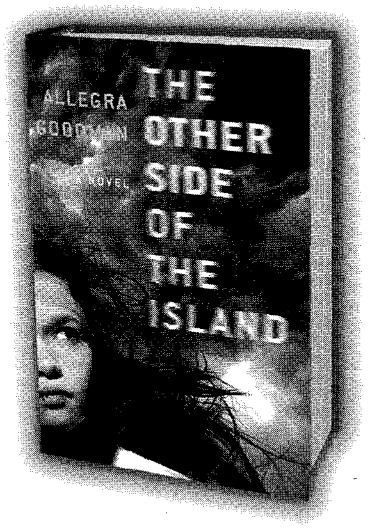
At the morgue, Breton surveyed the body. He noted two small bruises on the chin and a pair of faint scars on the abdomen—from stab wounds, he speculated—along with several tattoos. Cutting inward from the armpits to the pubic bone, he folded back the muscle and removed the rib cage with a saw. Six feet tall and weighing two hundred and sixteen pounds, Zadroga was solidly built, despite losing weight rapidly in the final months of his life. Even so, Breton recalls being struck by the size of Zadroga's lungs, which had a reddish, meaty appearance, and were unusually firm to the touch. "Normally, the lungs feel soft and spongy," he said. Lifting the lungs onto a scale, he also found that they were exceptionally heavy—almost three times the usual weight.

A dissection revealed the cause. Zadroga's lungs contained a vast number of foreign-body granulomas: knots of scar tissue that build up around inorganic particles, like the pearling around sand grains in an oyster. The scarring was so extensive and severe that the right ventricle of Zadroga's heart had thickened from the strain of trying to force blood through the ravaged vessels and capillaries. "It's not unusual to find a few granulomas in a lung," Breton noted later. "But usually this is something you see here and there." The granulomas in Zadroga's lungs were all over.

Breton couldn't identify the gritty particles lodged in the tissue with his microscope, though he remembers thinking that some of them looked "dustlike." He sent a sample to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, which identified the foreign material as a combination of talc, cellulose, calcium phosphate, and methacrylate plastic. Breton also spoke to Joe Zadroga, who said that his son's health had begun to deteriorate in the weeks following the World Trade Center attacks. Shortly after joining the recovery effort at Ground Zero, Joe said, James had developed a persistent cough.

After talking with Joe, Breton had little doubt about the underlying source of Zadroga's lung trouble. In his final report, he concluded that James Zadroga had died from respiratory failure due to severe panlobar granulomatous pneumonitis. He added that he felt "with a reasonable degree of medical certainty that the cause of death in this case was directly related to the 9/11 incident."

News of the diagnosis spread quickly. The hazy air in which rescue teams worked was already suspected of contributing to everything from chronic coughs to cancer, and Zadroga's death was widely seen as the harbinger of an epidemic. A few weeks later, the senators for New York and New Jersey—Charles Schumer, Hillary Clinton, Robert Menendez, and Frank Lautenberg—wrote to George Pataki, who was then the gov-



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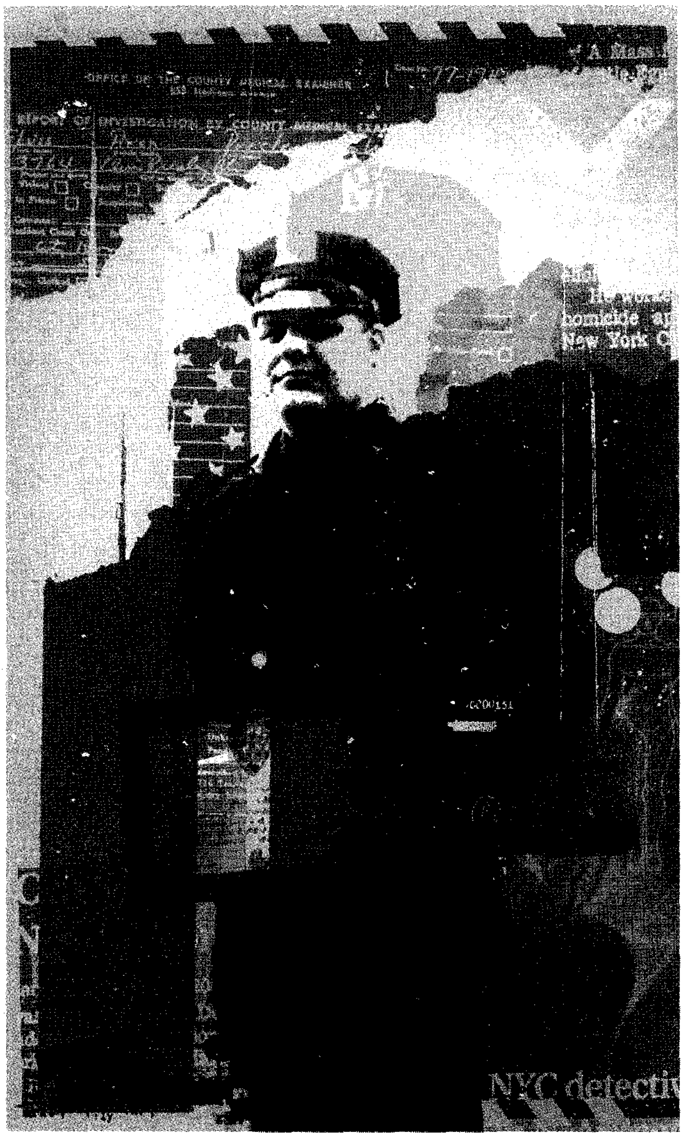
ernor of New York, urging him to extend the list of 9/11 victims, and to compensate the families of first responders who became chronically ill after working at Ground Zero. The letter called attention to the predicament of Zadroga's four-year-old daughter, Tyler Ann, now orphaned—Zadroga's wife, Ronda, had died the previous year—and in the care of her father's parents. "Detective Zadroga served with great courage in the line of duty and paid the ultimate sacrifice for his heroism," the senators wrote, adding that his death "will not be the last to be suffered by the brave Americans who rushed to Ground Zero in the hours and days after September 11."

The so-called Zadroga Act, which Pataki signed in August, 2006, provided generous benefits to the families of city workers who died of 9/11-related illnesses. Tyler Ann became one of the first recipients. But there were other complications to come. In order for Zadroga's name to be added to the official victims' list—and, ultimately, engraved on the National September 11 Memorial—his status as a casualty of 9/11 had to be verified. In the summer of 2007, copies of Zadroga's autopsy report and medical history (and, later, slides of tissue taken from his lungs) were sent to the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, Dr. Charles Hirsch. In October, he returned his verdict. Calling his assessment "markedly different" from Breton's, Hirsch disputed the claim that the talc and the cellulose found in Zadroga's lungs came from Ground Zero. Instead, he said, the embedded material was pharmaceutical debris produced by injecting a solution of crushed prescription pills.

The news provoked an uproar. The *Daily News* ran an editorial accusing Hirsch of "smearing" Zadroga's reputation. The president of New York's Detectives' Endowment Association suggested that the city was trying to arm itself against pending class-action suits from Ground Zero workers. A congressional delegation demanded that an independent panel be established to investigate all deaths connected to dust exposure at the 9/11 sites. "The history of 9/11 should not be decided behind closed doors by one person," Carolyn Maloney, a New York congresswoman, announced. Michael Moore took up the cause on his Web site.



James Zadroga died several years after working at Ground Zero.

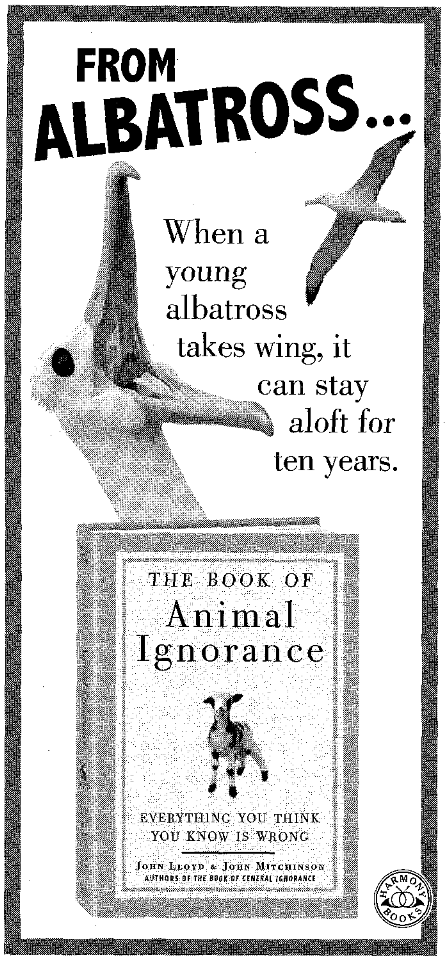
ALEX WILLIAMSON

At a conference a few days later, Joe Zadroga appeared with Michael Baden, a celebrity forensic pathologist who had used one of Zadroga's lung-tissue slides for a segment on 9/11-related illness in his HBO series, "Autopsy: Postmortem with Dr. Baden." Baden, a former Chief Medical Examiner of New York City who is now the forensic pathologist for the New York State Police, announced that he had reviewed the evidence and had no doubt that James Zadroga had died as a result of exposure to toxic dust at Ground Zero. There was no sign of any drug addiction, Baden said. "You could see glass fibres in there. You don't get that from injecting drugs."

In the months since the announcement, Baden has not changed his view. Discussing the case with me in his apartment, eighteen floors above the Museum of Modern Art, he acknowledged that granulomas can result from injecting ground-up medication—as happens when heroin users inject a solution of crushed methadone tablets—but disputed the idea that the wreckage in Zadroga's lungs could have been caused by shooting up. "People who have chronic lung disease from drug abuse have long histories of drug abuse, rehabilitation, doctors going in and out," he said. "You can't hide that sort of drug abuse." He had noted earlier that Breton had observed no needle scars on Zadroga's arms. "If I saw needle-track scars, that would make me think right away: intravenous abuse."

Baden would not speculate on what lay behind Hirsch's finding, though he wondered whether the case had involved something political. Either way, he said, he found the assessment baffling. "I think that Dr. Hirsch seems to have been misled by the fact of finding talc and cellulose, which can be found in people who grind down drugs that are meant for oral consumption. But they can occur in other ways." He said that he considered the assessment not only medically wrong but also "nasty"—a mean-spirited swipe at a guy "who was at Ground Zero, who really worked hard on the pile."

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner has the unrenovated pallor of a forgotten city agency. Dimmed by a concrete overbite, the street entrance manages to look at once ominous and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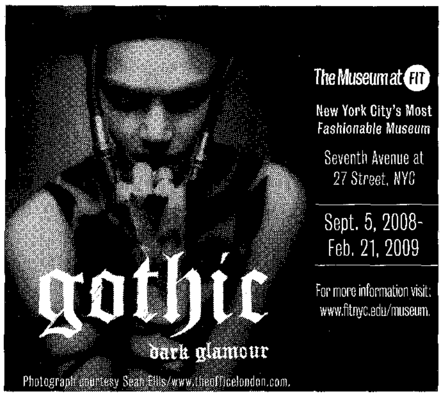
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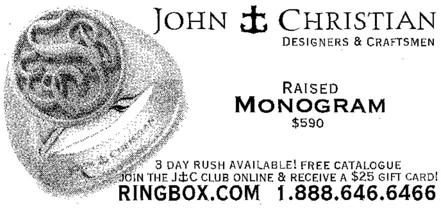
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shabby—a homely approach to an agency that houses one of the largest and busiest forensic labs in the country. Even by the standards of other big cities, New York has a prolific capacity to produce dead bodies, and, as Chief Medical Examiner, Charles Hirsch is responsible for the processing of some twenty-five thousand fatalities a year—nearly half the city's annual total. Roughly fifty-five hundred of those cases require autopsy, including all deaths that are violent, sudden, mysterious, or in some way related to public or consumer safety—an infant asphyxiated by a car seat, say, or a runner who died from applying too much topical muscle cream.

Hirsch's role is covertly powerful. Medical examiners are frequently required to testify in criminal cases, and in the past few years he has overseen the investigation of several high-profile fatalities, including the sudden death of Heath Ledger and the fatal child abuse of Nixzmary Brown. Being the final medical authority in such cases—particularly those involving police brutality or city negligence—can be politically fraught, and, in New York, administrative infighting and sheer population density combine to create a singular institutional challenge.

For someone occupying such a controversial position, Hirsch has managed to remain unusually invisible—in part because, unlike many medical examiners, he rarely speaks with the press. In the course of his nineteen-year tenure, he has never been interviewed on television, and has hardly ever been quoted in print. Jonathan Hayes, a senior medical examiner who has worked in the office since 1990, told me that one of Hirsch's maxims is "Medical examiners get into trouble by saying too much, too soon, or to the wrong person."

Privacy, however, can also create problems. By refusing to detail the evidence supporting his interpretation of Zadroga's death, Hirsch appeared secretive, fostering suspicions about his motives and the validity of his verdict. Policemen in particular felt betrayed. Barbara Butcher, who coördinates crime-scene investigations between Hirsch's agency and the Police Department, said, "There are cops I've known for years who wouldn't talk to me about it."

When I visited Hirsch recently, he had, as usual, been in his office since seven in the morning. (His departures are less consistent. He lives with his wife just a few blocks north of the office, and Hayes told me, "I've looked up from bodies and seen Dr. Hirsch standing there at three in the morning.") Hirsch is seventy-one years old. Courteous and mannerly, he walks with a slight forward cant—the lingering effect of an operation to repair a herniated disk. Although his face is lean, the cheeks are rosy, with large ears and dark eyebrows framing a nose that is slightly off center. Before coming to New York, Hirsch went to school in Chicago and worked in Cleveland, and his habits still reflect Midwestern tastes: sober suits worn with narrow suspenders, and, for pleasure, a pipe of Captain Black tobacco. When making a point, he occasionally taps one finger lightly on the desktop. His speech is so soft that one has to strain to hear it.

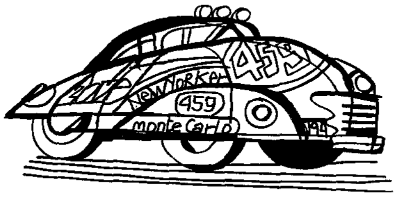
At an afternoon meeting, conducted with ten of the agency's thirty forensic pathologists, Hirsch received brisk updates on a dozen ongoing investigations, including the apparent suicide of an eighty-year-old man, and the autopsy of a woman who was found mummified in her apartment wearing nothing but a sweater. Hirsch listened to these recitations quietly, removing and folding his glasses with care. Dissatisfied with the evidence presented in the suicide, he asked about the meaning of a note found on the man's kitchen table, which was addressed to relatives in Eastern Europe and ended, simply, "Farewell."

"Was the letter dated?" he asked. "Do you know how long it was sitting there?"

He also lingered on the mostly full bottles of prescription medication that were found in the room. "People who want to kill themselves tend to empty every bottle," he noted. A discussion ensued. A medical examiner pointed out that the only empty bottle recovered from the scene contained Ambien, a sleep aid—but that the toxicology panel had found no traces of Ambien in the body. The bathroom cabinet contained an unfamiliar antibiotic, possibly bought in Eastern Europe, and not listed in any of the standard pharmaceutical resources. Hirsch listened politely until the conversation ended. Then he turned to address the medical examiner in charge of the case. "The note isn't compelling, and the toxicology is borderline at best," he said quietly. "If you're going to conclude that this is an intentional self-destruction by medication, you're going to have to prove it."

Hirsch is known for his willingness to challenge seemingly obvious conclusions, a tendency that, in politically charged cases, has often made him unpopular. In 1989, a twenty-five-year-old black man named Richard Luke died in police custody after being physically restrained by the arresting officers. Although the medical examiner's office confirmed extensive bruising, Hirsch ruled that Luke died not as a result of police brutality but from acute cocaine intoxication—a verdict that prompted street protests. Hirsch insists that he has been unaffected by the excoriation following his findings on the Zadroga case but noted that he had received requests from several senators urging him to change his assessment. "It's the only instance in which political pressure has been exerted on me," he remarked tartly.

Since the controversy, Hirsch has revealed little about the evidence in the case, but when we spoke he stressed the fact that the granulomas in Zadroga's lungs were concentrated in the arteries and not in the alveoli. Drug users who inject crushed pills routinely develop granulomas, because insoluble fillers used to bind a pill's active ingredient don't get digested—as they would if a pill was swallowed—and, instead, circulate through the bloodstream, eventually lodging in the narrow pulmonary arteries. The condition is well known and is sometimes referred to as "mainliner's lung." When I spoke to Michael Baden, he argued that Zadroga's lungs were in such bad shape that it was impossible to tell where the damage had originated. Hirsch disagreed. Crystals lodged in the pulmonary arteries can sometimes get pushed into the alveoli, he observed, because of the constant pressure of surging blood, but the same force does not exist in reverse. Therefore, the matter in Zadroga's pulmonary arteries must have entered his lungs through the bloodstream, not through inhalation.

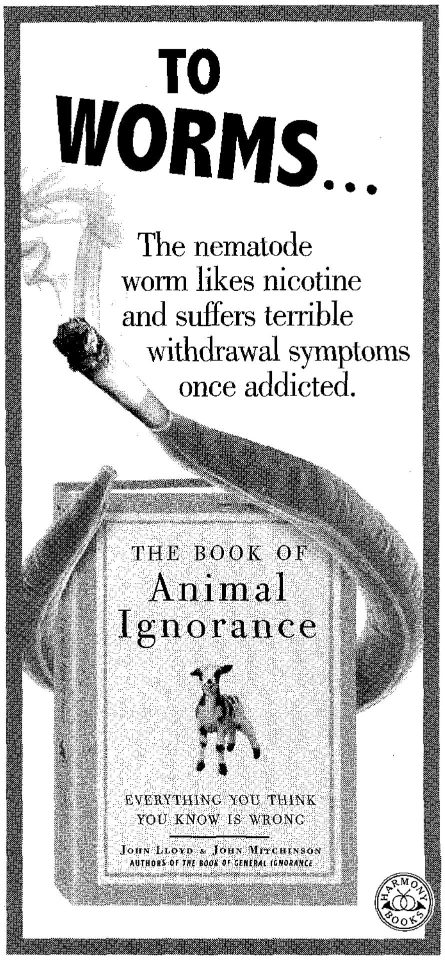


The type of material found in Zadroga's lungs was also significant. Talc and cellulose are widely used pharmaceutical ingredients, Hirsch noted, but neither was considered a major respiratory hazard at Ground Zero: talc because it wasn't found in the air in abundance; cellulose because it is not considered particularly hazardous. (The molecules are too large to pass through the elaborate filtering apparatus of the upper airway.) The absence of needle marks Hirsch deemed insignificant, because clean needles cause less scarring.

Talking about the case later, Jonathan Hayes remarked that one of the dangers of forensic pathology, particularly in dramatic cases, is that people see what they expect to see. "I think there's a possibility that that's what happened here," he said. "This guy's been down in the World Trade Center, spent hours after hours on the pile. You look at his lungs: oh, they're full of scar tissue and inflammation!" He went on, "As Dr. Hirsch would say, 'Sometimes it's necessary to slay a beautiful theory with an ugly fact.' "

Interestingly, Hirsch was himself exposed to the miasma of debris created during the 9/11 attacks. Early that morning, he rounded up a small crew of examiners and drove to the base of the burning towers to scout sites for a temporary morgue. With an investigator named Diane Crisci, he walked south along the West Side Highway and had just reached the pedestrian walkway connecting the World Trade Center to the Winter Garden when the south tower collapsed.

The blast threw Hirsch underneath the walkway, where he was battered by flying rubble but sheltered from the worst of the falling debris. When he opened his eyes, Hirsch recalled, the air was so black that he couldn't tell whether he was on the surface or buried. He spat out the dust and located Crisci. Together, the pair hobbled away from the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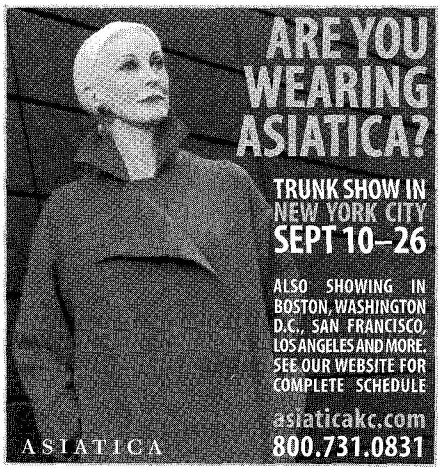
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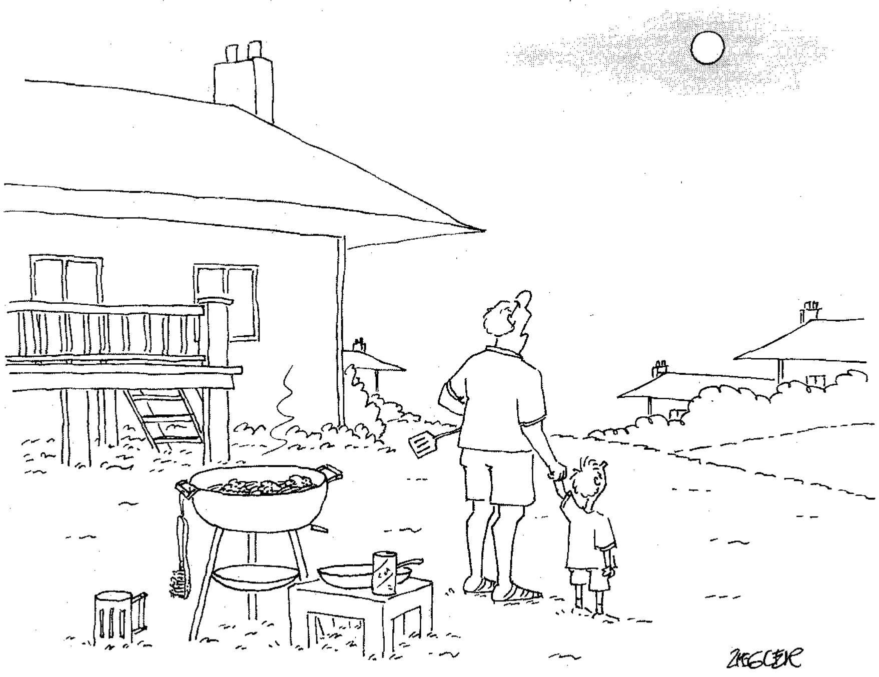
devastation—Hirsch with a sprained ankle and a gashed wrist, Crisci disabled by a broken leg. Hirsch arranged medical care for Crisci, then hitched a ride back to the office, his arm still bloody and his clothes covered in dust.

When I asked Hirsch whether he had experienced any symptoms from this exposure, he was emphatic that he had not. When I persisted—did he, at least, worry about the long-term effects?—he grew terse. "There's no point in worrying about things that you can't control," he said.

For professional reasons, Hirsch said, he continues to follow the epidemiological research, particularly a recent study that showed a statistical increase in sarcoidosis—an inflammatory disorder that attacks the lungs and other organs—among firefighters who worked at Ground Zero when the smoke was thickest. Last May, the weight of this study persuaded him to revise his opinion of five years earlier on the death of Felicia Dunn-Jones, a forty-two-year-old lawyer who died five months after being trapped in the initial explosive plume. In his review, Hirsch noted that, while the sarcoidosis that killed Dunn-Jones may have been present before 9/11, the illness had almost certainly been exacerbated by the particulate-laden air she inhaled on the morning the towers fell. The ruling made Dunn-Jones the first dust casualty to be entered on the official list of 9/11 victims. It also prompted a number of other families to resubmit cases that had been closed.

Each of these claims will be examined, Hirsch told me, and as more information becomes available some deaths may eventually be reclassified. But the results may be slow in coming. Hirsch said that he'd had letters from survivors who had developed cancers of one form or another, and that he could only reply that the scientific evidence isn't there yet. "It's going to take a lot of epidemiologic investigation," he said.

This attitude of scientific caution is not always welcomed by those who have lost a loved one to degenerative illness. "I would never misrepresent the reality that there are people who are terribly unhappy with us," Hirsch acknowledged. "I sometimes have to tell the family, 'You know what's in your heart. I have to go with the evidence.' " As difficult as such conversations are, he believes that truth ultimately allows the living to come to terms with the dead. In a lecture that he gave in 1997, Hirsch discussed the medical examiner's "sacred responsibility" to talk to the bereaved. "None of us lives comfortably with uncertainty," he observed. "Once they know and understand the facts, even if unpleasant, most people have the ability to make their peace with reality."



"Someday, son, a giant conglomerate will find a way to harness the moonlight and make us pay for it."

One Sunday in early March, I drove down to Little Egg Harbor, two hours south of New York City, to see Joe and Linda Zadroga. It was a cold day, with a brisk wind that whipped sand up from the roadsides and drove it against the sides of saltbox houses and trailered boats. Anchoring the tip of a small cul-de-sac, the Zadroga house, with an observatory window and wide, steeply raked front steps, is so much larger than its neighbors that at first I mistook it for a church. In the driveway, a pair of vintage cars sat covered next to a silver Ford pickup whose rear window had been transformed into a memorial: the World Trade Center towers framed by an American flag, and the legend "James Zadroga, Detective NYPD. Gone but not Forgotten. Fidelis ad Mortem."

Joe greeted me at the door. A former cop, like his son—he was the chief of police in North Arlington—he is stocky, with a bullish neck and shoulders and expressive hooded eyes. His wife, Linda, a petite woman with a deep tan, seemed tiny next to him. She wore a bright-pink sweatsuit and a silver heart-shaped pendant with a photograph of her son, inscribed "Jimmy." Sitting in the breakfast room, which overlooks a stretch of silvery shoreline, Joe talked about nearby Atlantic City ("She goes sometimes. I don't"), and bowed his head when Linda groused about his attachment to old T-shirts ("He holds on to everything"). Tyler Ann wandered in—a wary six-year-old in pink camouflage pajamas—and fussed with Joe's chair before wandering out again. When the conversation turned to James, Linda excused herself. "She don't like to talk about it," Joe said with a shrug.

Joe was just back from Washington, D.C., where he had attended a rally in support of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, introduced by Representative Maloney. Since his son's death, Joe has become a regular presence at such events; last year he attended about one a month. The attention that followed Breton's autopsy has added a disorienting public overlay to an otherwise private sorrow, and Joe seemed distinctly conscious of the symbolic pressure. But he was less concerned with arguing the merits of 9/11-related compensation claims than with affectionately recalling his son's good-old-boy ways. He cheerfully described James as "a partyer," who, during his days as a beat cop, would cadge meals from the Fire Department—"He always knew which firehouses had the best cooks"—and who, assigned to work on street crime, had an intuitive ability to sense who in a crowd was concealing a gun. There was a good-natured quality to this banter: a cop's-cop fondness, couched in jokey bravado. "That's his tough guy," Joe said, sifting through photographs of James that included one of him posing solemnly with a foot-long striper. He lingered over a later shot, taken at the ceremony when James made detective. In the picture, James stands with one arm around his wife, a pretty brunette with a shy smile. Dark-haired and baby-faced, he is powerfully built—a younger version of his father. He regards the camera with a lightly mocking pride.

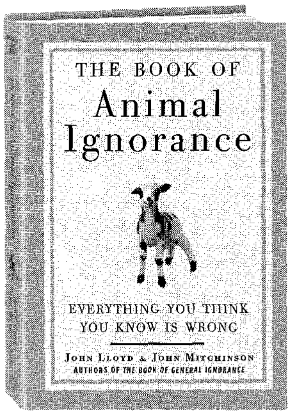
On the morning of 9/11, James Zadroga had gone into the city early for an arraignment, and was almost back home before he switched on the radio. When he heard the news, he dashed inside, grabbed a bag, and turned around. "His wife was on her knees crying for him not to go back," Joe told me. Ronda Zadroga was seven months pregnant at the time. Assigned to a traffic post, Zadroga instead made his way to the towers, where he joined the search for survivors.

In all, Zadroga spent roughly three weeks on the pile, but according to Joe his decline began almost immediately. "He was sick, like, the first day," he told me. "And he said he felt terrible from all the chemicals he inhaled. He felt like he had the flu." Joe urged his son to see a specialist, and eventually got him an appointment with a pulmonologist at the Columbia University Medical Center. "He examined Jimmy and did some tests and said come back in three, four weeks. And then, when we came back, he took us into his office and he says, 'I'm not going to treat you.' And I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'Nah. I can't treat you.' And he just walked out the door." The Columbia University Medical Center could not comment, owing to patient confidentiality, but Joe claimed that the same problem occurred with one doctor after another. "Anytime he went to a hospital after that, they would say, 'Oh, you're a hero! We'll take good care of you,'" he said. "And within two days they'd discharge him, and not do anything. You know, shoot him up with steroids, maybe, so he could breathe easier, something like that."

The steroid shots, Joe claimed, gave James episodes of 'roid rage, and he suspects that they may also have led to the degeneration of two disks in his back. Joe said that James was hospitalized in 2002 and prescribed a course of intravenous antibiotics. While in the hospital, he was given a shunt—a small plastic tube that allows nurses to administer medication intravenously—which was left in when Zadroga was discharged.

In January of 2003, Joe persuaded a doctor at the Deborah Heart and Lung Center, in New Jersey, to take a biopsy of James's lungs. The procedure removed three inch-long chunks of tissue, one from each lobe of Zadroga's right lung, and James had to spend about a week in the hospital recuperating. I contacted Deborah to verify the results of the biopsy, but the hospital, citing confidentiality rules, would not release them. Joe, however, assured me that the test showed the presence of substantial damage. "His lungs were, like, eighty per cent black," he said. It seemed strange, I told Joe, that no doctor would offer a diagnosis, or order additional tests, even after a biopsy showing such extensive damage. (If there's anything doctors like, it's ordering additional tests.) When I asked Joe why he thought so many doctors would have denied treatment, he blamed what he considered to be political pressure from the city, intended to discourage institutions from treating a potentially controversial patient. He also told me that the Police Department suspected Zadroga of malingering and often sent cars, and even a helicopter, to watch the house. (When I contacted the N.Y.P.D. about this, a spokesman denied surveillance or use of a helicopter, but said that the N.Y.P.D.'s Medical Division did make unannounced visits to Zadroga's home and that this is a standard procedure

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ANIMALS COULD FILL A BOOK.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"The professor suggested that everything that exists is only an illusion. I was disappointed, because my girlfriend is stunning."

• •

for an officer on long-term sick leave.)

By 2003, Zadroga's condition had worsened further. He relied on oxygen tanks, and on three occasions passed out while driving, twice wrecking the car. Zadroga had already petitioned the Police Department for permanent retirement with a disability pension—a request that was granted in 2004. In the meantime, he and Ronda relocated to Florida, hoping that the climate would be easier on James's lungs. They bought a house not far from Ronda's parents, who sometimes babysat Tyler Ann, who was then a year old.

In Florida, however, events took a strange turn. About a year after the move, Ronda died, suddenly, at the age of twenty-nine. The news came as a surprise to Joe. "We didn't even know she was sick!" he told me. When I asked what could have killed Ronda so abruptly, Joe suggested that it was stress—the burden of looking after a young child and an invalid husband. "It was just too much for her," he said. Reached by phone, Ronda's mother would not talk about her daughter's death. A family friend, however, said that the actual cause was blood poisoning, brought on by intravenous drug use, adding that "everybody down here knew what was going on." A local investigation noted that, according to the Medical Examiner's Office, Ronda's lethal infection could not be conclusively determined to be the result of intravenous drug use. But track marks and multiple needle punctures were found on the body, and a toxicology report revealed non-toxic levels of drugs, including methadone.

There were other indications that something was seriously wrong. Arriving at the house in Florida for the funeral, Joe and Linda found it a mess. "Jimmy had passed out," Joe said. "The dogs had crapped everywhere." He cleaned up, and the next day a woman from the Florida Department of Children and Families arrived, escorted by two sheriffs. In a report filed with the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office, investigators who went to the house two days after Ronda's death to look into a report of child endangerment and drug use observed that Tyler Ann "was verbal and appeared happy," but noted the presence of a pill bottle prescribed in a relative's name, and carpet stains "where the family pets had left feces." Joe said that he was also quizzed about Tyler Ann's care. "She said, 'What's going to happen to the baby?' " Joe recalled. "And I said, 'What do you mean, what's going to happen to the baby? The baby's going to be with her father.' And she said, 'Well, her father can't take care of the baby, I understand.' And I said, 'Yeah, you understand right. He can't take care of the baby, but that's why he's going back to New Jersey with us.' "

Relocated to the house in Little Egg, James spent most of his time in bed. There, Joe remembered, he would sometimes sleep without waking for several days—"not to eat, not to go to the bathroom, nothing." By that point, Joe said, James was taking up to twenty pills a day for pain, including the drug OxyContin. As he told me this, Joe glanced out the window. "I never seen him use his drugs inappropriately," he said. "I can say that." He stopped, and pressed the heel of both hands to his eyes. "Whether he did . . ." He trailed off and sighed. "And then, on the other hand, like the lawyer said, what difference does it make anyway? He's dying anyway. That's not what killed him!"

Last October, shortly after receiving a letter from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner challenging the cause of James's death, the Zadroga family drove to New York to meet with Hirsch and hear his findings in detail, an experience that Joe described as "like getting hit over the head with a baseball bat." Joe recalled his wife's outrage. "She said, 'Are you calling my son a junkie? A drug user?' He said, 'No, no. I'm not. I'm not saying he used illegal drugs. They were legal drugs, but he used them wrong.' " The day after the meeting, Representative Maloney called. According to Joe, she gave her assurance that her opinion was unchanged, and urged him to call a press conference. "She said, 'We don't believe it. We'll fight it,' " he recalls.

Since then, the Zadroga story has been at a stalemate, with many officials unwilling to question either the accuracy of Hirsch's findings or the truthfulness of the Zadrogas' account. Shortly after the news broke, Mayor Bloomberg aroused fury among victims' families and in the press when he said, "We wanted to have a hero, and there are plenty of heroes. It's just, in this case, science says this was not a hero." He soon apologized for his remark but stopped short of retracting it. The Mayor called Zadroga "a great N.Y.P.D. officer," adding opaquely, "It's a question of how you want to define

THE NEW YORKER

Festival

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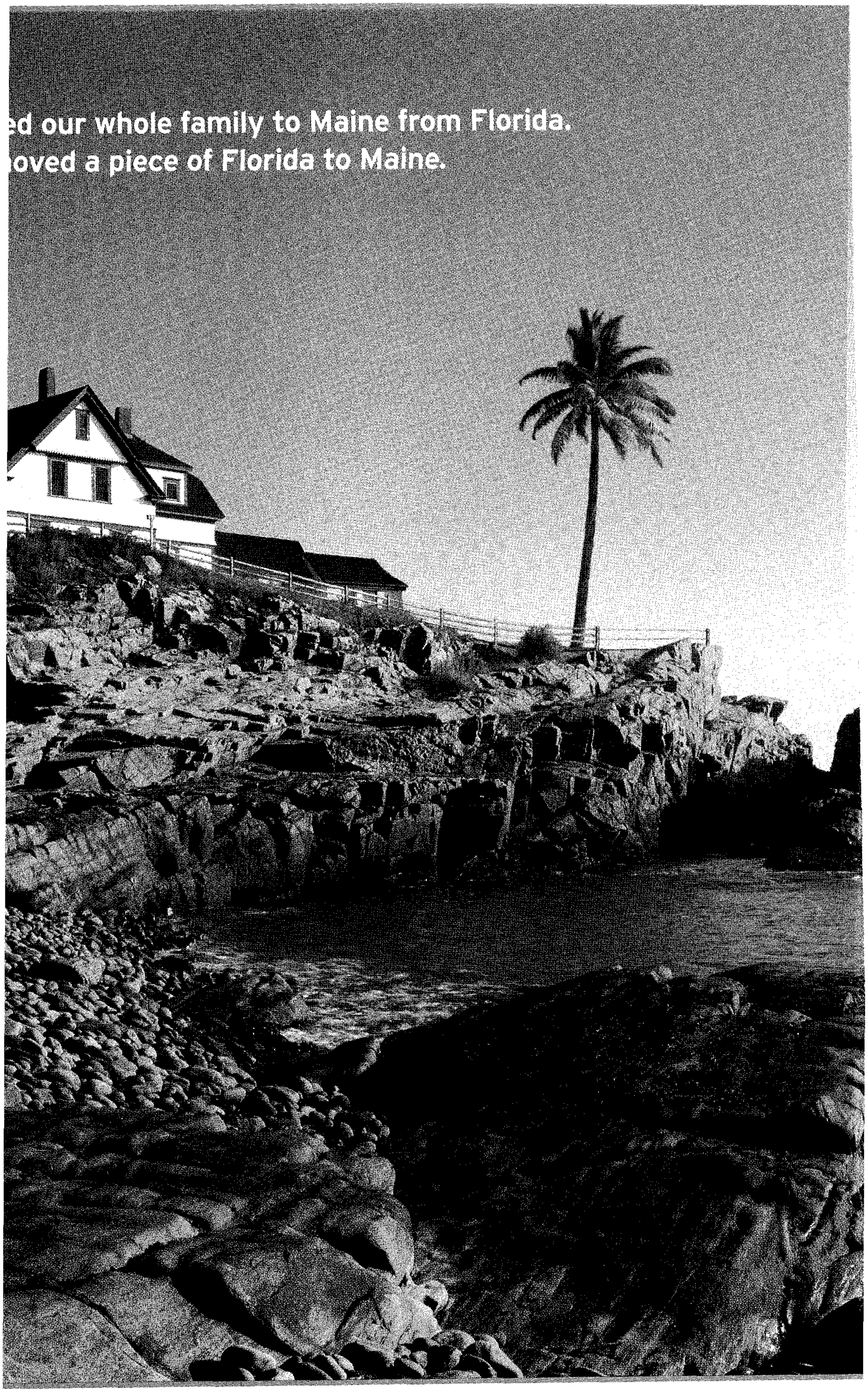
2008

Program Guide


ed our whole family to Maine from Florida.
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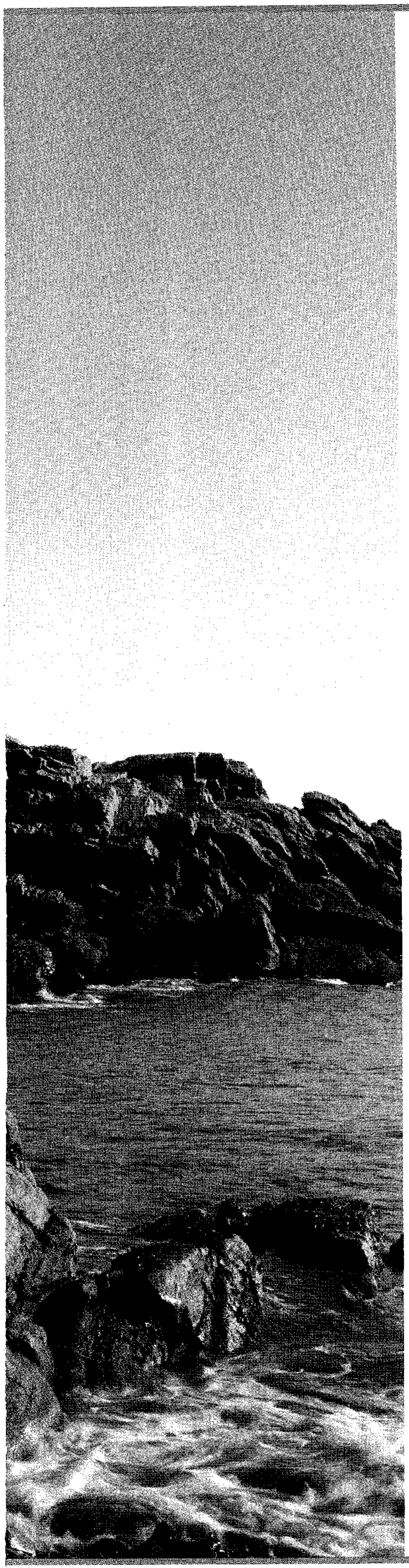

After the move, I bought a new couch with my Citi card. And a new rug. 5 lamps. And a secondhand car with 4-wheel drive. But here's the thing – my daughters Jen and Sadie hadn't bought into the idea of moving to Maine.

So since I had uprooted them from all their friends, I had the roots and everything else shipped 1,500 miles. Now we have a little bit of Palm Beach, right off the coast of Portland.

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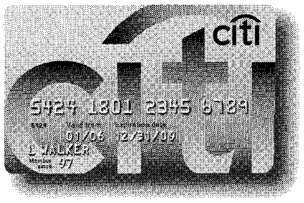

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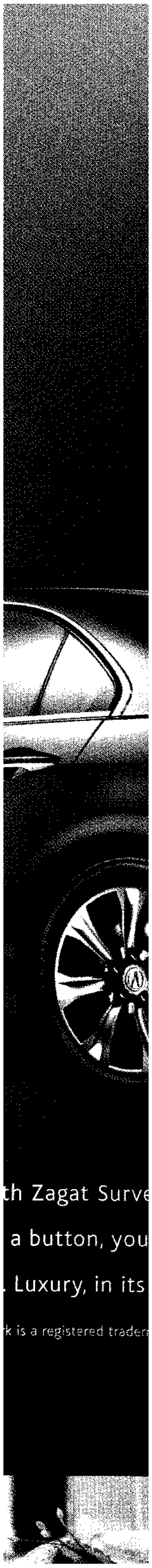

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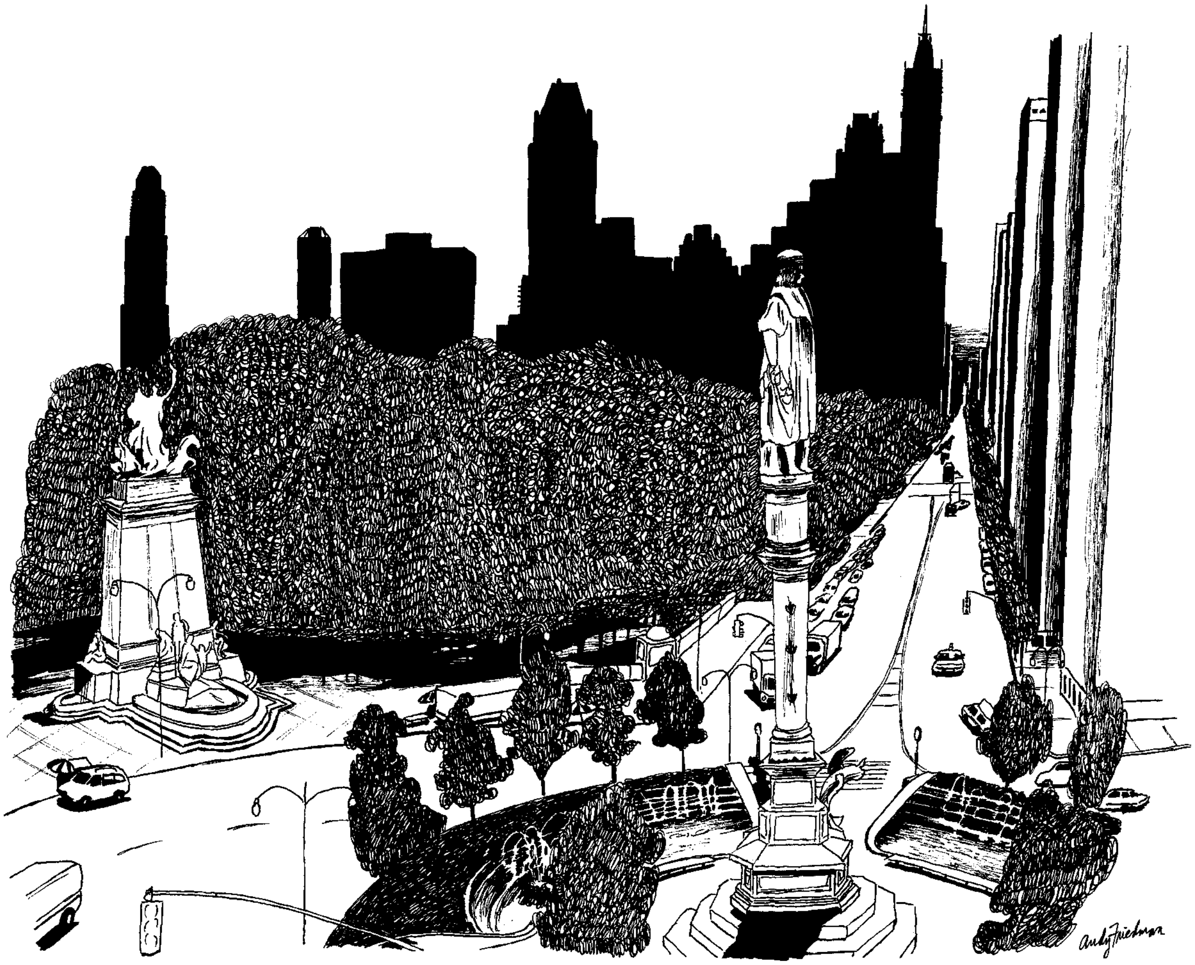


Welcome to **The New Yorker Festival**

The New Yorker Festival, a three-day congregation of writers, artists, thinkers, strategists, and performers, returns for its ninth year, from October 3rd through October 5th. A month before the Presidential election, this year's Festival will feature incisive political programming and a weekend-long voter-registration drive, along with participants from across disciplines and continents.

The Festival begins on Friday, with Fiction Night. This year, writers will join *New Yorker* editors to discuss the themes that inform their work. Junot Díaz, Sherman Alexie, and Shalom Auslander will talk about home, whether a place or a state of mind; Matthew Klam, Elmore Leonard, and Joyce Carol Oates will discuss the devils that lurk within; and T. Coraghessan Boyle, Jeffrey Eugenides, and Jhumpa Lahiri will address the ever elusive American dream. Also on Friday, the Canadian writer Alice Munro will sit down with *The New Yorker's* fiction editor; Sasha Frere-Jones will host the third New Yorker Dance Party; and our annual New Yorker Town Hall Meeting will focus on race and class in America.

On Saturday, the Festival continues with panels, interviews, and performances. Republican Senator Chuck Hagel, the poet Seamus Heaney, the director Clint Eastwood, and the Russian ballet master Alexei Ratmansky will be interviewed by *New Yorker* writers and editors; *New Yorker* contributors Malcolm Gladwell and Art Spiegelman will give talks; and a series of panel discussions will cover topics ranging from extreme sports to the art of Shakespearean acting. At night, we'll be joined by directors, singers, and humorists—among them Oliver Stone, Dawn Upshaw, and Stephen Colbert.

The Festival concludes on Sunday, with site-specific events around town, including a visit to the painter John Currin's studio, a panel of prestidigitators, and Calvin Trillin's annual downtown walking-and-eating tour. There will also be interviews with the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami and the actor Tommy Lee Jones; talks by Paul Theroux and Salman Rushdie; and master classes in political cartooning, humor writing, and literary criticism.

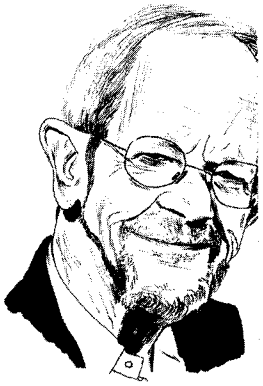
For more information, please read on.

All programming is subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit festival.newyorker.com. Tickets available at 12 noon E.T. on September 12th, at festival.newyorker.com or by calling 800-440-6974. Tickets will also be sold during Festival weekend at Festival HQ, at Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th Street, and at event doors. For details and exceptions, please see page 30 of the guide. Please note that purchases are subject to service charges.

Illustrations by Andy Friedman

Friday | October 3 | 2008

An evening of discussions among writers whose stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*; an interview with Alice Munro; a New Yorker Town Hall Meeting on race and class in America; a Cartoon Caption Contest at Festival HQ; and a New Yorker Dance Party. Ticket prices are as follows: all Fiction Night events, $25; the Town Hall Meeting, $20; the Caption Contest, $25; the Dance Party, $25. A complete list of ticket prices can be found in the schedule, on pages 31 and 32 of the guide.



Elmore Leonard

Fiction Night | Discussions Among Writers

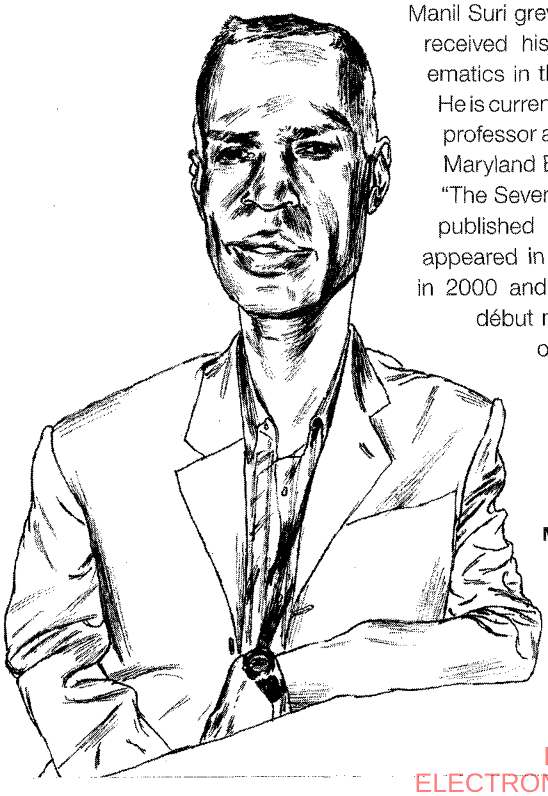
Writing About Home

With **Sana Krasikov**, **Yiyun Li**, and **Manil Suri**.
Moderated by **Cressida Leyshon**.

Sana Krasikov was born in Ukraine and grew up in Georgia and the United States. Her first published story, "Companion," appeared in *The New Yorker* in 2005. Her most recent story for the magazine, "The Repatriates," appeared in the April 21st issue and was included in her début collection, "One More Year," which came out in August. She is the recipient of an O. Henry Award and a Fulbright Scholarship.

Yiyun Li grew up in Beijing and came to the United States when she was twenty-three. Her début story collection, "A Thousand Years of Good Prayers," won the inaugural Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, a Guardian First Book Award, and a Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. Her first novel, "The Vagrants," will be published in February. Her story "A Man Like Him" appeared in the May 12th issue of *The New Yorker*.

Manil Suri grew up in India and received his Ph.D. in mathematics in the United States. He is currently a mathematics professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. "The Seven Circles," his first published story in English, appeared in *The New Yorker* in 2000 and was part of his début novel, "The Death of Vishnu," which was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award. His second novel, "The Age of Shiva," came out in February.



Manil Suri

Cressida Leyshon is the deputy fiction editor of *The New Yorker*.

7 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
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The Devil Within

With **Matthew Klam**, **Elmore Leonard**, and **Joyce Carol Oates**. Moderated by **Daniel Zalewski**.

Matthew Klam is the author of the short-story collection "Sam the Cat and Other Stories," whose title story was originally published in *The New Yorker*. His story "Issues I Dealt with in Therapy" was included in the magazine's Future of American Fiction Issue, in 1999. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a PEN/Robert Bingham Award, and an O. Henry Award.

Elmore Leonard published his first novel, "The Bounty Hunters," in 1953. He has since written more than forty books, most recently "Up in Honey's Room," which came out last year. His novel "Riding the Rap" grew out of his *New Yorker* story of the same title. A dozen of his books have been adapted for film, including "Hombre," "Out of Sight," "Get Shorty," and "Rum Punch," which was made by Quentin Tarantino as "Jackie Brown." A new book, "Road Dogs," will be published next summer.

Joyce Carol Oates has written numerous novels, most recently "My Sister, My Love," as well as works of drama, poetry, nonfiction, and literary criticism. In April, she published "Wild Nights!," a collection of short stories. She has received the National Book Award and the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in Short Fiction and is the Roger S. Berlind Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Princeton. Her fiction and criticism have appeared in *The New Yorker* since 1994.

Daniel Zalewski is the features editor of *The New Yorker*.

7 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater, Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

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THREE UNFORGETTABLE DECADES

Friday | October 3 | 2008

The American Dream

With **T. Coraghessan Boyle**, **Jeffrey Eugenides**, and **Jhumpa Lahiri**. Moderated by **Leo Carey**.

T. Coraghessan Boyle is the author of eleven novels, including "World's End," which won the PEN/Faulkner Award, and "Talk Talk," and eight story collections, including "Tooth and Claw," whose title story appeared in *The New Yorker* and was included in "Best American Short Stories 2004." His new novel, "The Women," will be published next year. His stories have appeared in *The New Yorker* since 1993; the most recent, "Thirteen Hundred Rats," ran in the July 7th & 14th issue.

Jeffrey Eugenides is the author of the novels "The Virgin Suicides," which was adapted for film by Sofia Coppola, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Middlesex," parts of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*. This year, he edited "My Mistress's Sparrow Is Dead: Great Love Stories, from Chekhov to Munro." He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Whiting Writers' Award. His most recent story for the magazine, "Great Experiment," appeared in the March 31st issue.

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in England to Bengali parents and emigrated to the United States as a child. She won a Pulitzer Prize for her début story collection, "Interpreter of Maladies." Her first novel, "The Namesake," came out in 2003 and was adapted for film by the director Mira Nair in 2006. Her new story collection, "Unaccustomed Earth," was published in April. Parts of all three books were first published in *The New Yorker*.

Leo Carey is the deputy books editor of *The New Yorker*.

7 P.M. Angel Orensanz Foundation
172 Norfolk Street

Family Secrets

With **Roddy Doyle**, **Anne Enright**, and **Tobias Wolff**. Moderated by **Willing Davidson**.

Roddy Doyle is the author of nine novels, including "The Commitments" and "The Woman Who Walked Into Doors," and also plays, children's books, and a memoir. In 1993, his novel "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha" received the Booker Prize. His new book, "The Deportees," a collection of short stories, came out in January. He has contributed fiction to *The New Yorker* since 1996, most recently "Bullfighting," which appeared in the April 28th issue.

Anne Enright received the Man Booker Prize last year for her novel "The Gathering." Her other books include the novels "The Wig My Father Wore," "What Are You Like?," and "The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch," along with "Making Babies," a book of essays about motherhood. "Yesterday's Weather," a collection of her short stories, is out in September, and includes "Natalie," which appeared in the 2007 Winter Fiction Issue of *The New Yorker*.

Anne Enright

Tobias Wolff's books include the novel "Old School," parts of which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*; a novella, "The Barracks Thief," which won a PEN/Faulkner Award; and the memoirs "This Boy's Life" and "In Pharaoh's Army: Memories of the Lost War." A new story collection, his fourth, "Our Story Begins," came out in March. He has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 1995; his essay "Winter Light" appeared in the June 9th & 16th Summer Fiction Issue.

Willing Davidson works in *The New Yorker's* fiction department.

9:30 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street

Outlaws

With **Peter Carey**, **Hari Kunzru**, and **Gary Shteyngart**. Moderated by **Peter Canby**.

Peter Carey was born in Australia and is the author of many books, including the story collection "The Fat Man in History," the memoir "Wrong About Japan," and the novels "My Life as a Fake," "Theft: A Love Story," and "His Illegal Self," which came out in February. He is a four-time recipient of the Miles Franklin Award, and two of his novels, "Oscar and Lucinda" and "True History of the Kelly Gang," won the Booker Prize.

Hari Kunzru lives in New York and is the author of three novels: "The Impressionist," which won the Betty Trask Prize and the Somerset Maugham Award; "Transmission"; and "My Revolutions," which came out in January. In 2003, he was included in *Granta's* "Best of Young British Novelists." His most recent story for *The New Yorker*, "Raj, Bohemian," appeared in the March 10th issue.

Gary Shteyngart was born in Leningrad and emigrated to the United States as a child. His début novel, "The Russian Debutante's Handbook," won a Stephen Crane Award for First Fiction and a National Jewish Book Award for fiction. His second novel, "Absurdistan," parts of which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, was published in 2006 and selected as one of the ten best books of the year by the New York *Times Book Review*.

Peter Canby is the head of *The New Yorker's* fact-checking department and the author of "The Heart of the Sky: Travels Among the Maya."

9:30 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater, Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

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Friday | October 3 | 2008

The New Yorker Town Hall Meeting
Race and Class in America

This election year has tested and redrawn the lines of American demographics. The Presidential contest has brought the issue of race in our politics to the fore, and the economy continues to distance the haves from the have-nots. This year's panel addresses the next chapter in America's story of money, ethnicity, and the long march of progress.

With **Barbara Ehrenreich**, **Thomas Frank**, **John McWhorter**, **Leslie Sanchez**, and **Cornel West**. Moderated by **David Remnick**.

Barbara Ehrenreich is an activist and author whose books include "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America," "Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream," and "Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy." She published her nineteenth book, "This Land Is Their Land: Reports from a Divided Nation," in June. In 2006, she founded United Professionals, a nonpartisan organization for workers. She is the recipient of a National Magazine Award and a Sydney Hillman Foundation Award.

Thomas Frank is the author of four books, including "One Market Under God" and "What's the Matter with Kansas?" His most recent, "The Wrecking Crew: How Conservatives Rule," came out in August. He is the recipient of a Lannan Nonfiction Award and the co-editor of "Commodify Your Dissent" and "Boob Jubilee," two collections of essays from the journal *The Baffler*, which he co-founded and edits.

John McWhorter is a linguist who writes about language and race relations. He is the author of twelve books, including "Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America," "Winning the Race: Beyond the Crisis in Black America," "The Power of Babel: A Natural History of Language," and several books on Creole. A new book, "Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue: The Untold Story of English," comes out in October. He is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and writes a column for the New York *Sun*.

Leslie Sanchez is the C.E.O. of Impacto Group LLC, a market-research firm focussing on Hispanics and women. Previously, she served as the executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and as deputy press secretary for the Republican National Committee, where she oversaw a multimillion-dollar ad campaign aimed at Hispanic voters in the 2000 election. Last year, she published "Los Republicanos: Why Hispanics and Republicans Need Each Other." She is a political contributor to CNN.

Cornel West is a scholar and author whose books include "Race Matters," "Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America," and "Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism." His new book and CD, "Hope on a Tightrope: Words & Wisdom," will come out in November. He is the recipient of an American Book Award and is an honorary chair of the Democratic Socialists of America. He is a former Harvard professor and currently teaches at Princeton, as the Class of 1943 University Professor of Religion in the Center for African American Studies.

David Remnick is the editor of *The New Yorker*.

7 P.M. Town Hall
123 West 43rd Street
(Advance tickets are available only at ticketmaster.com, at all ***ticketmaster*** *outlets in the New York metropolitan area, at the Town Hall box office, or by calling 212-307-7171.)*

Where I Come From

With ***Sherman Alexie***, ***Shalom Auslander***, and **Junot Díaz**.
Moderated by **Carin Besser**.

Sherman Alexie grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation, in Wellpinit, Washington. He has published eighteen books, including the story collections "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" and "Ten Little Indians" and the novel "Reservation Blues." His most recent book, "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian," came out last year and received a Boston Globe–Horn Book Award and a National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

Shalom Auslander was raised in upstate New York in an Orthodox Jewish community. He is the author of the story collection "Beware of God" and the memoir "Foreskin's Lament," part of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*. He is a regular contributor to National Public Radio's "This American Life" and is completing his first novel, "Leopold Against the World."

Junot Díaz was born in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States with his family when he was six. He is the author of a story collection, "Drown," and a novel, "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao," which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction this year. Parts

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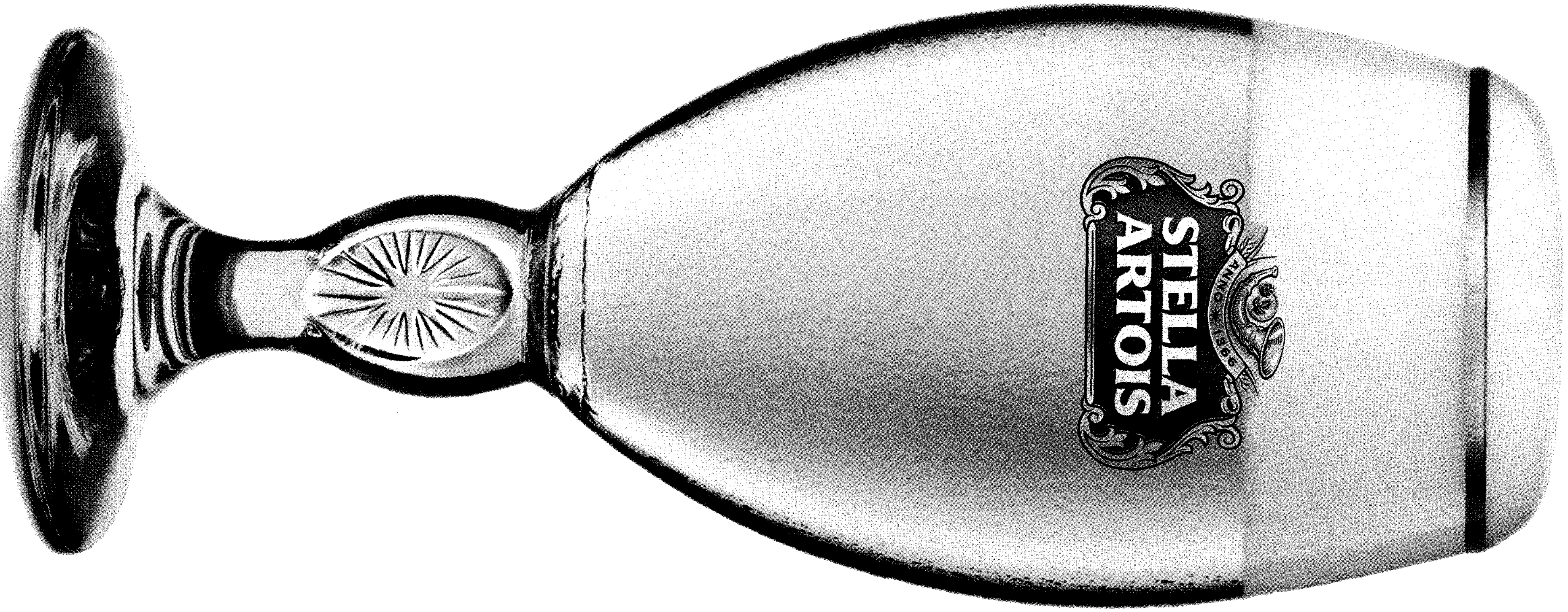

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Friday | October 3 | 2008

Sherman Alexie

Alice Munro

of both books first appeared in *The New Yorker.* His stories have appeared in the magazine since 1995.

Carin Besser is the associate fiction editor of *The New Yorker.*

9:30 P.M. Angel Orensanz Foundation
172 Norfolk Street

Fiction Night: In Conversation With

Alice Munro
interviewed by Deborah Treisman
Close focus.

Alice Munro published her first collection of stories, "Dance of the Happy Shades," in 1968. It received the Governor General's Award, Canada's highest literary honor, which she has won twice since then, for "Who Do You Think You Are?" and "The Progress of Love." Her other collections include "The Love of a Good Woman" and "Runaway," both of which received the Giller Prize, and "The View from Castle Rock." Her stories have appeared in *The New Yorker* since 1977; her story "Deep-Holes" ran in the June 30th issue.

Deborah Treisman is the fiction editor of *The New Yorker.*

8 P.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

Casual Friday

The Cartoon Caption Game

Test your gag-writing skills at a live version of *The New Yorker's* Cartoon Caption Contest. *New Yorker* cartoonists will judge the results, and former Caption Contest winners will be on hand as team captains. Hosted by the magazine's cartoon editor, **Robert Mankoff.**

Robert Mankoff has been a cartoonist for *The New Yorker* since 1977 and became the magazine's cartoon editor in 1997. He is the founder and former president of the Cartoon Bank, a digital archive of *New Yorker* cartoons and cover art, and the author of "The Naked Cartoonist: A New Way to Enhance Your Creativity." He wrote the introduction to "The New Yorker Cartoon Caption Contest: The Winners, the Losers, and Everybody in Between," which has just been published.

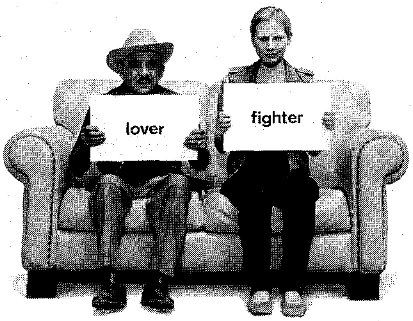
8 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

A New Yorker Dance Party
Hosted by Sasha Frere-Jones, with special guest d.j. Ghislain Poirier.

Ghislain Poirier is a Montreal-based music producer and d.j. He has collaborated internationally with artists such as Beans, TTC, and Face-T, and has released several albums, including "Breakupdown" and "No Ground Under." He is the creator of Bounce Le Gros, a monthly party in Montreal, and the founder of his own label, Rebondir Records.

Sasha Frere-Jones is the pop-music critic of *The New Yorker.* His work has been selected four times for the "Da Capo Best Music Writing" series. He is a member of the band Ui, with whom he has recorded five albums and toured America and Europe.

10 P.M. Hiro Ballroom and Lounge
88 Ninth Avenue
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)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east coast
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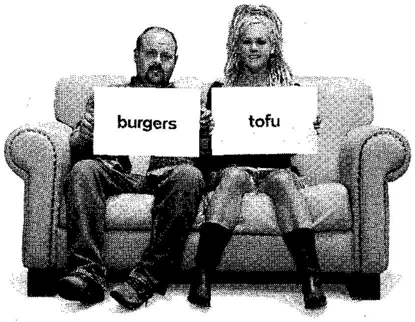
conservatives
liberals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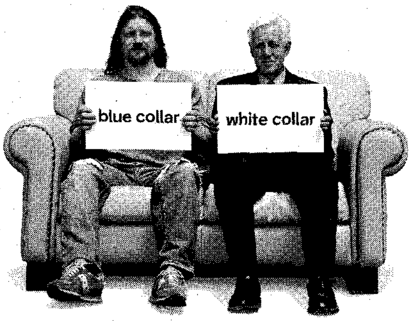
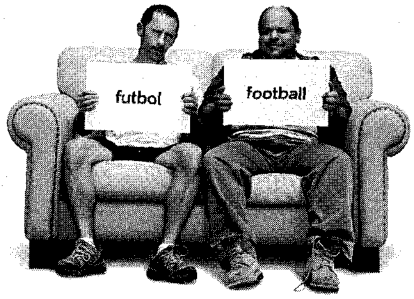

blue collar
white collar


futbol
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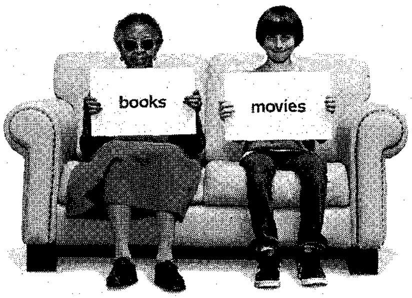
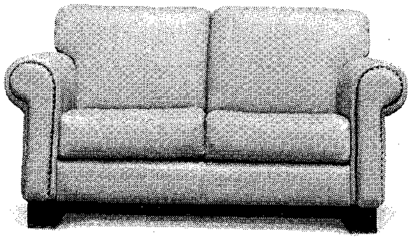

books
movies

It's American to disagree. It's also American to come together in the face of a challenge. And few challenges are as urgent as global climate change. More than a million people from all walks of life have come together to demand solutions. Now we need you. Take a minute and join us at wecansolveit.org. Together we can solve the climate crisis.



Join we today.

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Saturday | October 4 | 2008

A day of interviews, panel discussions, and talks by *New Yorker* writers; an excursion to Governors Island; Early Shift and Late Shift events; preview screenings of the upcoming films "Fear(s) of the Dark" and "Frontrunners"; and book signings at Festival HQ. Ticket prices are as follows: daytime events, $25; Governors Island, $80; Early Shift and Late Shift, $35; film screenings, $25. A complete list of ticket prices can also be found in the schedule, on pages 31 and 32 of the guide.

Writers and Their Subjects

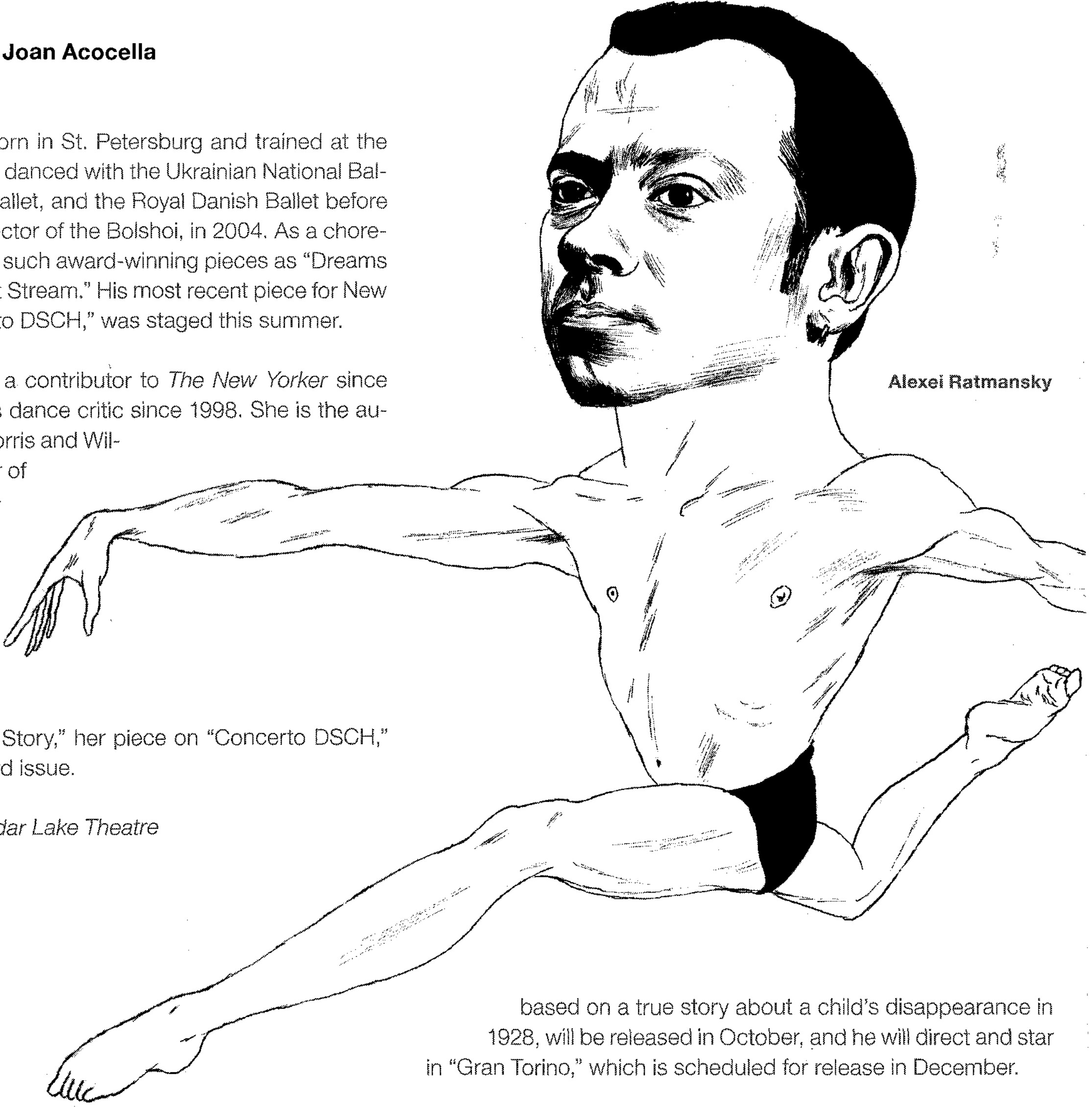
Alexei Ratmansky and Joan Acocella

A step ahead.

Alexei Ratmansky was born in St. Petersburg and trained at the Bolshoi Ballet School. He danced with the Ukrainian National Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and the Royal Danish Ballet before becoming the artistic director of the Bolshoi, in 2004. As a choreographer, he has created such award-winning pieces as "Dreams of Japan" and "The Bright Stream." His most recent piece for New York City Ballet, "Concerto DSCH," was staged this summer.

Joan Acocella has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1992 and the magazine's dance critic since 1998. She is the author of books on Mark Morris and Willa Cather and is the editor of "The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky." A collection of her essays, "Twenty-Eight Artists and Two Saints," most of which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, was published last year. "Double Story," her piece on "Concerto DSCH," appeared in the June 23rd issue.

1 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street



Alexei Ratmansky

Clint Eastwood and Lillian Ross

Make my day.

Clint Eastwood is a two-time Academy Award-winning director, for "Unforgiven" and "Million Dollar Baby," both of which were named Best Picture. He has directed more than thirty films, among them "Mystic River," "Flags of Our Fathers," and "Letters from Iwo Jima," and has starred in more than sixty, including the "Dirty Harry" movies and the classic Westerns of Sergio Leone. His most recent film, "Changeling," based on a true story about a child's disappearance in 1928, will be released in October, and he will direct and star in "Gran Torino," which is scheduled for release in December.

Lillian Ross joined the staff of *The New Yorker* at the end of the Second World War and has contributed to nearly every section of the magazine. She is the author of twelve books, including "Reporting," "Picture," "The Player: A Profile of an Art," "Moments with Chaplin," and, most recently, "Reporting Back." New York University's department of journalism ranked "Reporting" and "Picture" among the top hundred works of U.S. journalism of the twentieth

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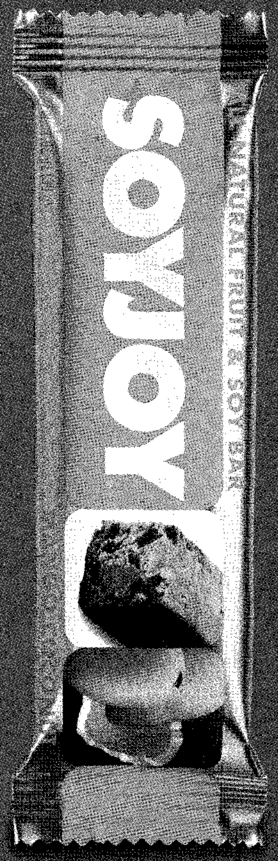

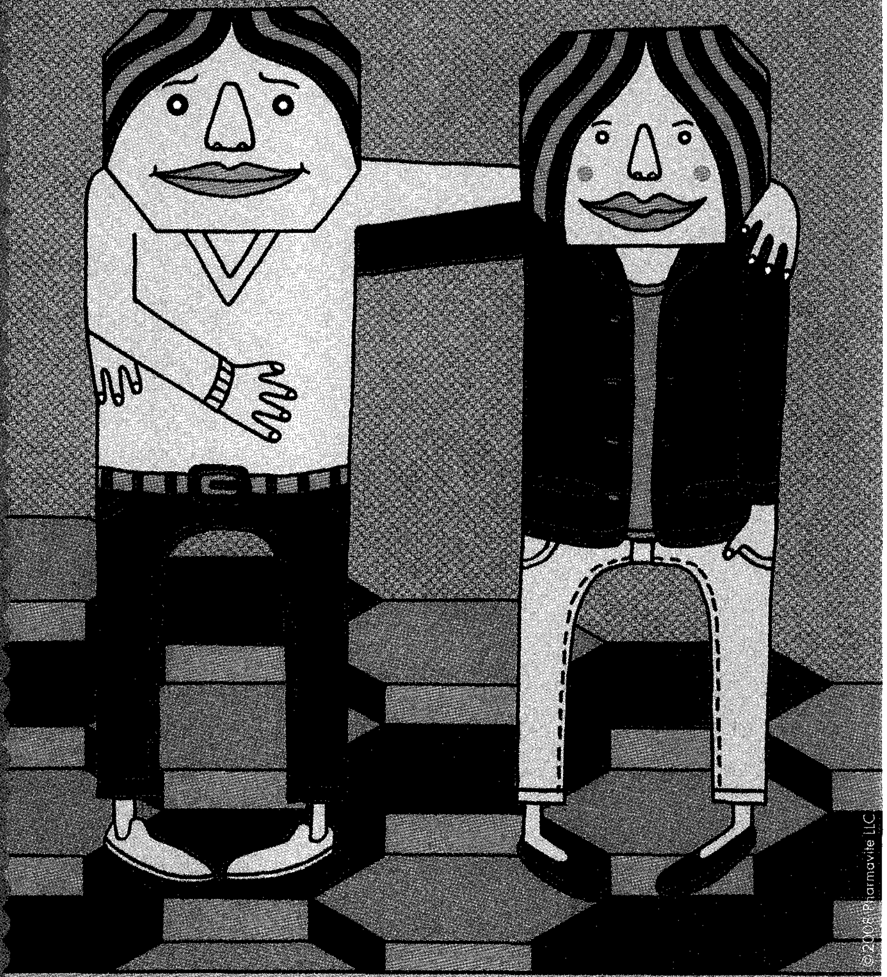

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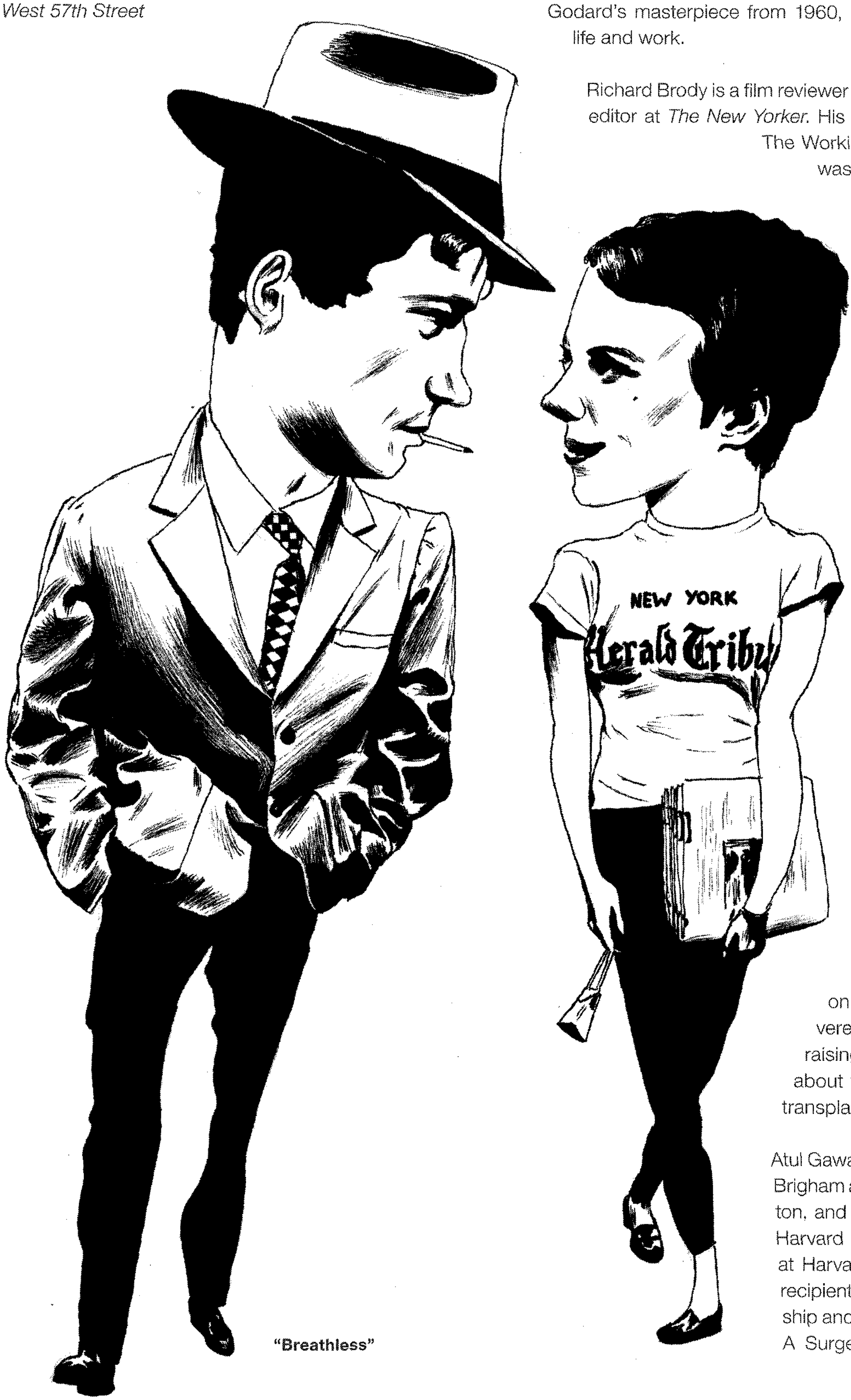
century. "Nothing Fancy," her piece on Clint Eastwood, appeared in the magazine in 2003.

1 P.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street



"Breathless"

Richard Brody on the films of Jean-Luc Godard
Murderers murder, lovers love.

Richard Brody will present a screening of "Breathless," Jean-Luc Godard's masterpiece from 1960, and talk about the director's life and work.

Richard Brody is a film reviewer and a Goings On About Town editor at *The New Yorker.* His book "Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard" was published in May; parts of it first appeared in the magazine this year. His Profile of Godard ran in *The New Yorker* in 2000.

4 P.M. IFC Center
323 Sixth Avenue

In Conversation With

Jean-Michel Dubernard
interviewed by
Atul Gawande
About face.

Jean-Michel Dubernard is a Lyon-based doctor specializing in transplant surgery and a former deputy in the French National Assembly. In the late nineties, he led an international team of doctors in performing a groundbreaking hand transplant, followed by several successful hand-forearm transplants. In 2005, he and Bernard Devauchelle performed the first partial face transplant, on a woman who had been severely disfigured in a dog attack, raising unprecedented questions about the ethics and psychology of transplant surgery.

Atul Gawande is a practicing surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital, in Boston, and an associate professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and at Harvard Medical School. He is the recipient of a 2006 MacArthur Fellowship and the author of "Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect

Science" and "Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance"; parts of both books first appeared in *The New Yorker.*

10 A.M. Acura Stage
at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street

Seamus Heaney
interviewed by Paul Muldoon
History and homeland.

Seamus Heaney was born in Northern Ireland and published his first major collection of poems, "Death of a Naturalist," in 1966. In 1995, he received the Nobel Prize in Literature. His many poetry collections include "The Haw Lantern," "Opened Ground," the Whitbread Award-winning "The Spirit Level," and "District and Circle," which received the 2006 T. S. Eliot Prize. He has also written plays, criticism, and an award-winning translation of "Beowulf." His poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker* since 1971.

Paul Muldoon became the poetry editor of *The New Yorker* last year. He is the author of many books of poetry, including "Moy Sand and Gravel," which won a 2003 Pulitzer Prize, "Madoc: A Mystery," "Hay," and "Horse Latitudes," as well as opera librettos and essay collections. He was born in Northern Ireland and was a student of Seamus Heaney's at Queen's University in Belfast.

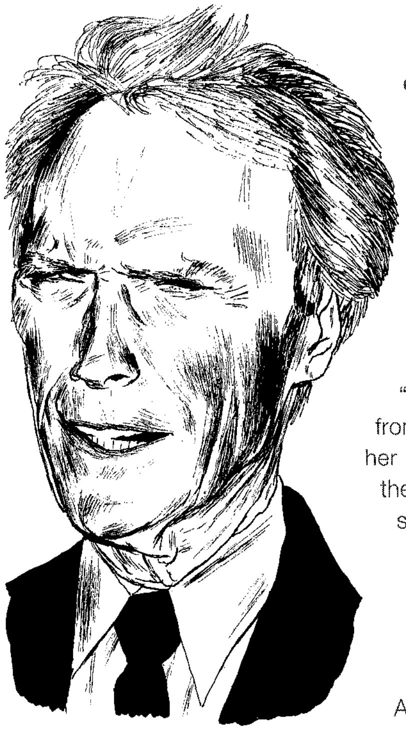
1 P.M. New York Society for Ethical Culture
2 West 64th Street

Chuck Hagel interviewed by Ryan Lizza
The dissenter.

Chuck Hagel is the senior United States Senator from Nebraska and serves on four Senate committees, including the committees on intelligence and foreign relations. He was an infantry squad leader with the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division during the Vietnam War, and has been an outspoken critic of the Bush Administration's prosecution of the war in Iraq. Before entering the Senate, he co-founded Vanguard Cellular Systems and was the president of McCarthy & Co., an investment-banking firm. His book, "America: Our Next Chapter," came out in March.

Ryan Lizza is *The New Yorker's* Washington correspondent. He is covering the 2008 Presidential campaign and writes about national politics for the magazine.

4 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street



Clint Eastwood

Elizabeth Edwards
interviewed by Atul Gawande
Health-care initiative.

Elizabeth Edwards is an attorney and health-care advocate, and the author of "Saving Graces: Finding Solace and Strength from Friends and Strangers." In 1996, she and her husband, Senator John Edwards, founded the Wade Edwards Foundation, which awards scholarships and builds computer labs for high-school students in Raleigh and Greensboro, North Carolina. She has worked for the North Carolina Attorney General's office and as a bankruptcy lawyer in Raleigh. Currently, she is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

Atul Gawande is a practicing surgeon in Boston and an associate professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and at Harvard Medical School.

4 P.M. New York Society for Ethical Culture
2 West 64th Street

Lynda Barry in conversation with Matt Groening
Drawn together.

Lynda Barry is a cartoonist and novelist, and the creator of the comic strip "Ernie Pook's Comeek." Her many illustrated books include "Cruddy," "The! Greatest! of! Marlys!," "One! Hundred! Demons!" and "The Good Times Are Killing Me," which was adapted for the stage as an Off Broadway musical. Her most recent book is "What It Is," a graphic how-to memoir. She and Matt Groening met as students at the Evergreen State College, where, as an editor for the school paper, he was the first to publish her comics. Her next book, "Nearsighted Monkey," will be published next spring.

Matt Groening is the ten-time Emmy Award-winning creator of "The Simpsons" and "Futurama." He received the National Cartoonist Society Reuben Award in 2002. His comic strip "Life in Hell" débuted in 1980 and has been anthologized in several books, including "School Is Hell," "Childhood Is Hell," and "The Big Book of Hell." "The Simpsons," which premièred as a series of shorts on "The Tracey Ullman Show" in 1987, is entering its twentieth season.

4 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

Saturday | October 4 | 2008

New Yorker Talks

Malcolm Gladwell

"The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes"

Malcolm Gladwell is a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and the author of the best-selling books "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference" and "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking." In 2001, he won a National Magazine Award for "The Pitchman," his profile of Ron Popeil. A new book, "Outliers: Why Some People Succeed and Some Don't," will be published in November.

2 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater, Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

Art Spiegelman

"Breakdowns: Comix 101"

Art Spiegelman won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for his graphic novel in two parts, "Maus: A Survivor's Tale." He is the author of "In the Shadow of No Towers" and the children's book "Open Me . . . I'm a Dog!" With Françoise Mouly, he co-edited several volumes of the comics anthology "Little Lit." He will publish two new books in October: "Jack and the Box," a children's book, and "Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!," a memoir that includes a selection of his experimental comics from the nineteen-seventies.

4:30 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater,
Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

Panels

If I Were Running This Campaign

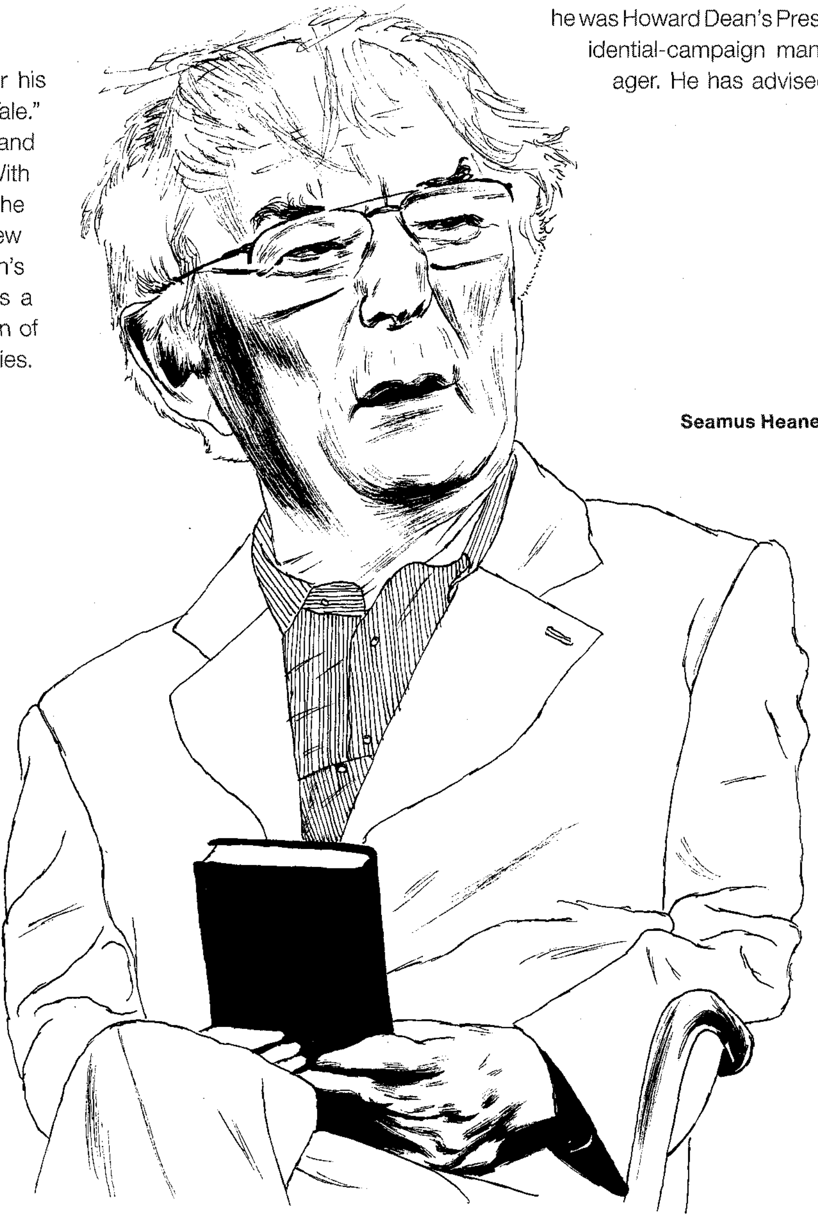
With **Donna Brazile**, **Alex Castellanos**, **Edward J. Rollins**, and **Joe Trippi**. Moderated by **Jeffrey Toobin**.

Donna Brazile served as Al Gore's campaign manager in 2000, making her the first African-American to run a major Presidential campaign. She has also worked for the Presidential candidacies of Jesse Jackson, Michael Dukakis, and Bill Clinton. She is the author of "Cooking with Grease: Stirring the Pots in American Politics" and is a regular political commentator on CNN.

Alex Castellanos has served as an adviser to nine U.S. Presidential campaigns, including George W. Bush's in 2000 and 2004, as a senior strategist, and, this year, Mitt Romney's. He has worked with more than two dozen governors, members of Congress, and other political officeholders in the United States and abroad. He currently serves on the John McCain for President Ad Council.

Edward J. Rollins served as Assistant to the President during the Administration of Ronald Reagan, directing the White House Office of Political Affairs and the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. He managed President Reagan's reëlection campaign in 1984 and directed the defeat of House Speaker Tom Foley in 1992. He has played major roles in eight other Presidential campaigns; most recently, he served as Mike Huckabee's national chairman and chief strategist.

Joe Trippi has worked as a consultant on the Democratic Presidential campaigns of Edward Kennedy, Walter Mondale, Gary Hart, Richard Gephardt, and, most recently, John Edwards. In 2004, he was Howard Dean's Presidential-campaign manager. He has advised



Seamus Heaney

the successful campaigns of California Senator Alan Cranston, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, and Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey. He is the author of "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything."

Jeffrey Toobin is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and a senior analyst for CNN. His recent subjects for the magazine include death-penalty reform and the political consultant Roger Stone. He is the author of five books, most recently "The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court," which won the 2008 J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize.

10 A.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

Extreme Sports

With **Greg Child**, **Lynne Cox**, and **Andrew McLean**.
Moderated by **Nick Paumgarten**.

Greg Child is an Australian mountaineer residing in the U.S. He has ascended the two highest Himalayan peaks, K2 and Mount Everest, and explored remote mountain ranges around the world. He is the author of several books, including "Thin Air: Encounters in the Himalayas," "Mixed Emotions: Mountaineering Writings of Greg Child," and "Postcards from the Ledge," which won a Banff Mountain Festival Book Award. In 1998, he won an Emmy for his video "Hitting the Wall."

Lynne Cox, a long-distance swimmer, was the first person to swim across the Straits of Magellan and across Lake Titicaca, and also the first to swim around the Cape of Good Hope. In 1987, she swam across the Bering Strait. Recently, she swam more than a mile in the freezing waters of the Northwest Passage, an experience she recounted in "A Dip in the Cold," which appeared in the April 21st issue of *The New Yorker.* She is the author of "Swimming to Antarctica," part of which first appeared in the magazine, and the best-selling memoir "Grayson."

Andrew McLean is a ski mountaineer who has achieved more than a hundred first descents. He was part of the first team to ascend the Vinson Massif, in Antarctica, via the Dater Glacier, and in 2002 he completed nineteen first descents on Baffin Island, in the Canadian Arctic. In 2004, he was the first to ski down Mount Hunter, in Alaska, a descent of five thousand feet. He is the author of "The Chuting Gallery," a guide to skiing the Wasatch Mountains.

Nick Paumgarten has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 2000. His recent subjects for the magazine include Eliot Spitzer, Neil Young, and a man who was trapped in an elevator for two days. "Dangerous Game," his piece about Andrew McLean, appeared in the 2005 Journeys Issue.

10 A.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

Covering the Candidates

With **Ta-Nehisi Coates**, **Bill Keller**, **Peggy Noonan**, and **Jack Shafer**. Moderated by **Ken Auletta**.

Ta-Nehisi Coates is a contributing editor at *The Atlantic.* He has been a staff writer at the *Village Voice* and *Time* and a contributor to the New York *Times Magazine* and the Washington *Post.* In May, he published his first book, "The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood," about growing up black in Baltimore.

Bill Keller became the executive editor of the New York *Times* in 2003. He joined the paper in 1984, as a reporter, and later served as bureau chief in Moscow and in Johannesburg, an Op-Ed columnist, and a senior writer at the *Times Magazine.* He was the paper's foreign editor from 1995 to 1997 and its managing editor from 1997 to 2001. In 1989, he received a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Soviet Union.

Peggy Noonan is a political columnist who appears weekly in the *Wall Street Journal.* She is the author of eight books, including "When Character Was King," "What I Saw at the Revolution," and "Patriotic Grace," which is out in September. She was a special assistant to the President in the White House of Ronald Reagan.

Jack Shafer is an editor-at-large of *Slate*, where he writes the Press Box column. Previously, he was an editor of *Washington City Paper* and *SF Weekly.* He has written about new media and the press for such publications as the New York *Times Magazine* and *The Columbia Journalism Review*, and has contributed book reviews to the *Times*, the Washington *Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal.*

Ken Auletta has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 1977 and written the Annals of Communication since 1992. He is the author of ten books, including "Backstory: Inside the Business of News," which collects many of his media pieces for the magazine, and "Media Man: Ted Turner's Improbable Empire," which grew out of his National Magazine Award-winning *New Yorker* Profile. He is working on a book about the future of media.

10 A.M. Cathedral NYC
504 West 41st Street

The Next Generation of Fashion

With **Louise Markey**, **Makoto Takada**, and **Joeri Van Yper**.
Moderated by **Judith Thurman**.

Louise Markey was born in Australia and received a bachelor's degree in fashion from Sydney's University of Technology in 2003. Before enrolling in the master's program in fashion design at Central Saint Martins, in London, she designed women's shirts for Burberry. In February, she showcased her final college collection and launched her own label, LF Markey. She is currently a finalist in London's Fashion Fringe competition.

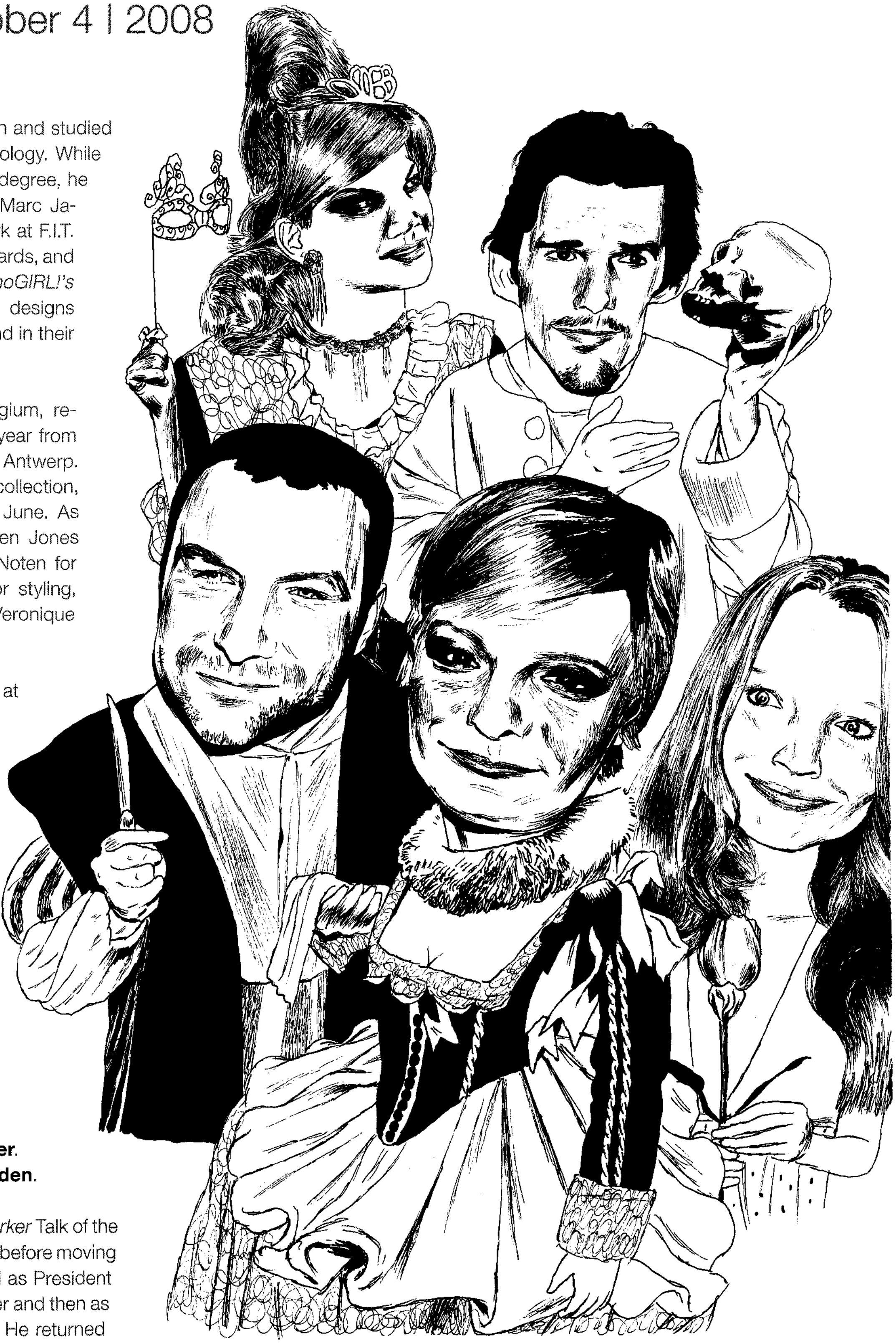
Saturday | October 4 | 2008

Makoto Takada grew up in Japan and studied at the Fashion Institute of Technology. While earning his bachelor of fine arts degree, he worked as a pattern-maker for Marc Jacobs and Ralph Lauren. His work at F.I.T. won departmental and critics' awards, and he is the current winner of *CosmoGIRL!'s* Born to Lead competition. His designs will be sold under the XOXO brand in their holiday collection this winter.

Joeri Van Yper, a native of Belgium, received his master's degree this year from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. He presented his final academy collection, "Frozen/Overexposed Stars," in June. As a student, he trained with Steven Jones for hat design, with Dries Van Noten for prints, and with Olivier Rizzo for styling, and worked with the designer Veronique Branquinho.

Judith Thurman, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, writes the In Fashion column for the magazine. She is the author of the biographies "Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette" and "Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller." "Cleopatra's Nose: 39 Varieties of Desire," a collection of her *New Yorker* essays, came out last year.

1 P.M. Cathedral NYC
504 West 41st Street



Clockwise from top: Kristen Johnston, Ethan Hawke, Lauren Ambrose, Martha Plimpton, and Liev Schreiber

The Campaign Trail

With **Hendrik Hertzberg**,
Ryan Lizza, and **George Packer**.
Moderated by **Dorothy Wickenden**.

Hendrik Hertzberg was a *New Yorker* Talk of the Town reporter from 1969 to 1977 before moving to Washington, where he served as President Jimmy Carter's chief speechwriter and then as the editor of *The New Republic*. He returned to *The New Yorker* in 1992 as a senior editor and writer, and is the principal contributor to the Comment section of the magazine. He is the author of "Politics: Observations & Arguments."

Ryan Lizza joined *The New Yorker* last year as its Washington correspondent. Previously, he was a senior editor at *The New Republic*. He is covering the 2008 Presidential campaign for the magazine.

George Packer is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and the winner of several Overseas Press Club awards. He is the author of "The Village of Waiting," "Blood of the Liberals," and "The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq," which won the Helen Bernstein Book Award for Excellence in Journalism. His play, "Betrayed," based on his *New Yorker* article of the same title, won this year's Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Off Broadway Play.

Dorothy Wickenden is the executive editor of *The New Yorker.*

1 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

Political Humor

With **Samantha Bee**, **Andy Borowitz**, **James Downey**,
John Oliver, and **Allison Silverman**.
Moderated by **Susan Morrison**.

Samantha Bee has been a correspondent for "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" since 2003. She was born in Toronto and received a Canadian Comedy Award for Pretty Funny Female Performance in 2005. Her film credits include "Ham & Cheese," "Underdog," and the upcoming "Cooper's Camera" and "Motherhood." She was a founding member of the all-female comedy troupe the Atomic Fireballs.

Andy Borowitz has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1998. He is the author of "Who Moved My Soap?: The CEO's Guide to Surviving in Prison," "The Republican Playbook," and "The Borowitz Report: The Big Book of Shockers," a collection of articles from his online column. The Borowitz Report has won seven About.com Political Dot-Comedy Awards and received the first National Press Club Award for Humor.

James Downey has been a writer for "Saturday Night Live" for more than thirty years. He joined the show in its second season and continues to write many of its political sketches, including this year's satires of the Presidential-election debates. In the early eighties, he was the head writer at "Late Night with David Letterman." Last year he appeared in the film "There Will Be Blood."

John Oliver is a writer and correspondent for "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." Previously, he wrote and starred in "The Department," which aired on BBC Radio, and was the co-host of two series of the BBC Radio 2 show "Political Animal." This summer, he appeared in Mike Myers's most recent film, "The Love Guru." His standup special, "John Oliver: Terrifying Times," débuted on Comedy Central in April and was released on DVD in August.

Allison Silverman is the executive producer and former co-head writer of Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report." She began her career as an improv-comedy performer in Chicago and has written for "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" and "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," which won an Emmy Award and a Peabody Award while she was there. She has worked for "The Colbert Report" since its inception.

Susan Morrison is the articles editor of *The New Yorker* and the editor of The Talk of the Town and Shouts & Murmurs. This year, she edited "Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Reflections by Women Writers."

4 P.M. Cathedral NYC
504 West 41st Street

Young Shakespeareans

With **Lauren Ambrose**, **Ethan Hawke**, **Kristen Johnston**,
Martha Plimpton, and **Liev Schreiber**.
Moderated by **Adam Gopnik**.

Lauren Ambrose starred as Claire Fisher in the Emmy Award-winning HBO series "Six Feet Under." Her film credits include "Can't Hardly Wait," "Swimming," and "Psycho Beach Party." She made her Broadway début in 2006, in Clifford Odets's "Awake and Sing!" Last year, she starred as Juliet in the Shakespeare in the Park production of "Romeo and Juliet," and returned to the Park this year in "Hamlet," playing Ophelia.

Ethan Hawke's many film credits include "Dead Poets Society," "Reality Bites," "Gattaca," "Training Day," and "Before Sunset," for which he co-wrote the Oscar-nominated screenplay. He played the title role in the 2000 screen version of "Hamlet," and directed and starred in "The Hottest State," based on his novel. His stage roles include Michael Bakunin in Tom Stoppard's "The Coast of Utopia" and Hotspur in Lincoln Center's production of "Henry IV."

Kristen Johnston received two Emmy Awards for her role on "3rd Rock from the Sun." Her stage credits include "The Women," "Aunt Dan and Lemon," "Love Song," "As You Like It," "Scarcity," and, most recently, "The Understudy." In 2004, she played Beatrice in the Shakespeare in the Park production of "Much Ado About Nothing." Her films credits include "Strangers with Candy," "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me," "Music & Lyrics," and the upcoming "Bride Wars."

Martha Plimpton received a Drama Desk Award for her work in "The Coast of Utopia" and has starred on Broadway in "Shining City" and "Top Girls." Last year, she played Helena in the Shakespeare in the Park production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Imogen in Lincoln Center's production of "Cymbeline." This winter, she will appear in the Roundabout's revival of "Pal Joey." Her film credits include "The Goonies," "Parenthood," and "I Shot Andy Warhol."

Liev Schreiber has appeared on the New York stage as Hamlet, Macbeth, Iago, and Henry V. In 2005, he won a Tony Award for his performance in "Glengarry Glen Ross"; last year, he starred in the Broadway production of "Talk Radio," for which he received a Tony Award nomination. He has appeared in films including "A Walk on the Moon," "Hamlet," and "The Manchurian Candidate," and made his screenwriting and directing début in 2005, with "Everything Is Illuminated."

Adam Gopnik has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1986. He is the author of the essay collections "Paris to the Moon" and "Through the Children's Gate," both of which include many of his pieces from the magazine, as well as a novel for children, "The King in the Window."

4 P.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

About Town

A Governors Island Bike Tour

Adriaan Geuze, **Leslie Koch**, and **Ricardo Scofidio** will join **Paul Goldberger** for a tour of Governors Island, followed by brunch and conversation. A ferry will transport ticket buyers to the island, where bicycles will be provided.

Adriaan Geuze is a Prix de Rome winner and a co-founder of West 8, an urban-design and landscape-architecture firm based in Rotterdam. Its projects have ranged from the waterfront revitalization of Toronto to London's Jubilee Gardens. In 2002, he received the Harvard Graduate School of Design's Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design, and in 2005 he curated the International Architecture Biennale in Rotterdam. Last year, West 8 won the international design competition for the redevelopment of Governors Island.

Leslie Koch is the president of the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation. She is responsible for the planning, redevelopment, and ongoing operations of the island, including its role as a public destination. Previously, she worked as a marketing executive for Microsoft and was the chief executive of the Fund for Public Schools, the nonprofit affiliated with the New York City Department of Education.

Ricardo Scofidio is one of the founders of the New York-based architecture firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro, whose work was the subject of a retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 2003. Its past projects include the Blur Building, in Switzerland, and Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. The firm, in collaboration with West 8, designed the winning plan for Governors Island. It is currently leading the redevelopment of Lincoln Center and, with Field Operations, the High Line.

Paul Goldberger is the architecture critic of *The New Yorker*. He holds the Joseph Urban Chair in Design and Architecture at the

Right to Vote '08

This year, the New Yorker Festival will feature a weekend-long voter-registration effort, in conjunction with the New York City Board of Elections. New York State residents who are eighteen and older will be able to register at each Festival event and at Festival HQ, where surprise guests will be helping out with registrations. Take advantage of this last-minute opportunity; the registration deadline in New York State for the November election is October 10th.

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New School. His books include "The City Observed: New York," "The Skyscraper," and "Up from Zero: Politics, Architecture, and the Rebuilding of New York."

11 A.M. Governors Island Ferry Terminal
Battery Maritime Building
10 South Street, Slip 7

Early Shift

Saturday Night Sneak Preview: "Frontrunners"

The New Yorker presents a special screening of "Frontrunners," a new documentary film about the race for Student Union president at Stuyvesant High School. After the screening, *The New Yorker's* **Rebecca Mead** will talk with the film's creative team and some of its subjects.

Rebecca Mead has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1997. Her recent subjects have included the composer Nico Muhly and Bobby Egan, a New Jersey restaurateur who became an unofficial ambassador to North Korea. In 2004, she received a Front Page Award from the Newswomen's Club of New York. Her first book, "One Perfect Day: The Selling of the American Wedding," was published last year.

6:30 P.M. Stuyvesant High School
345 Chambers Street

Paul Rudd talks with Michael Specter

Wise guy.

Paul Rudd has appeared in dozens of films since his breakthrough role in 1995 in "Clueless," among them "The Object of My Affection," "Wet Hot American Summer," "The Shape of Things," and "Anchorman." He has also appeared in several of the films of Judd Apatow, including "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" and "Knocked Up," and starred on Broadway in "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," "Twelfth Night," and "Three Days of Rain." He will next star in "Role Models," which he co-wrote, in November, and "I Love You, Man," next March.

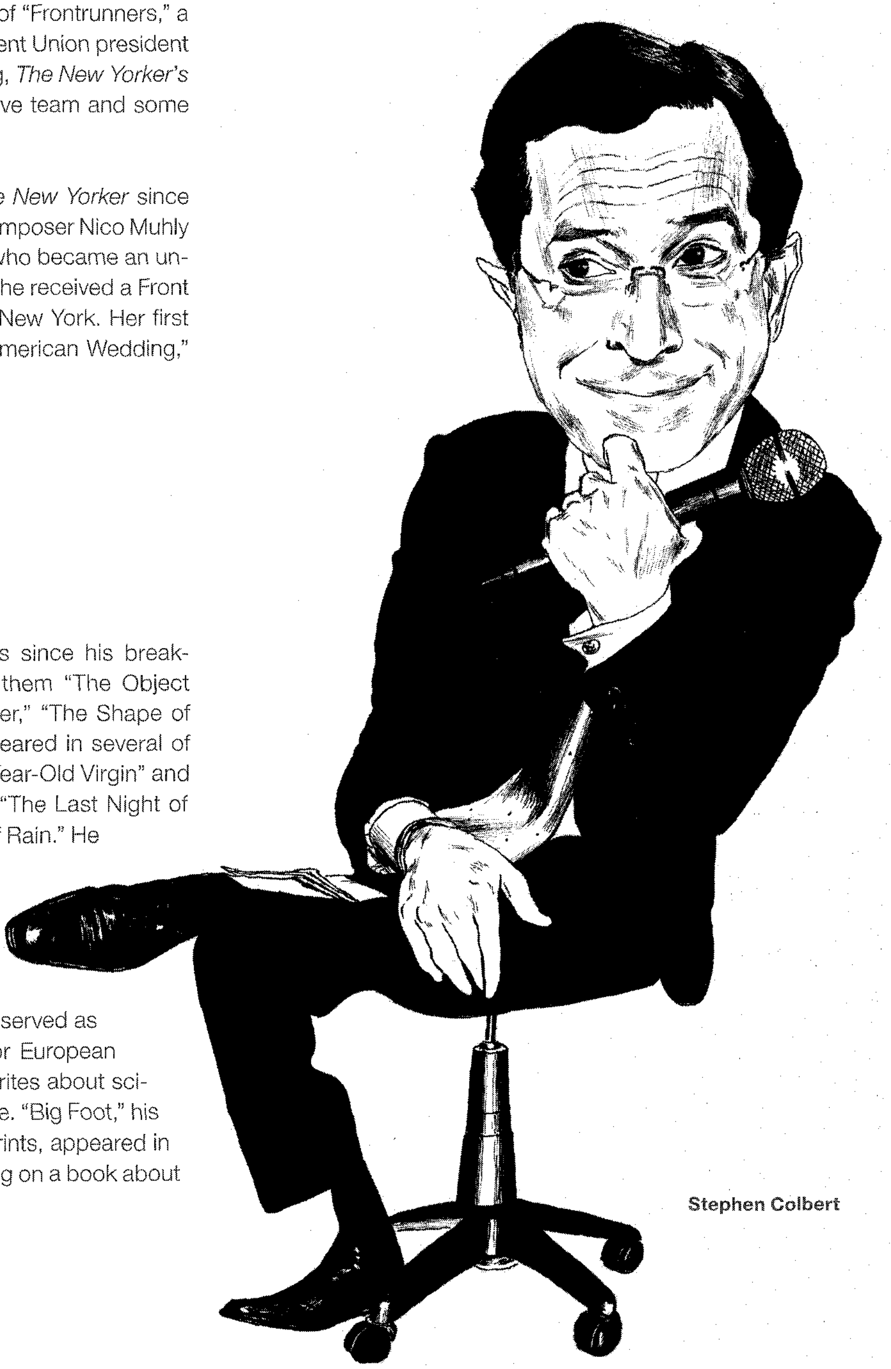
Michael Specter has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1998. Previously, he served as the Moscow bureau chief and then as senior European correspondent for the New York *Times*. He writes about science and public-health issues for the magazine. "Big Foot," his piece on misconceptions about carbon footprints, appeared in the February 25th issue. He is currently working on a book about America's growing fear of science.

7:30 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street

Dawn Upshaw talks with Alex Ross

The bold soprano.

Dawn Upshaw is a four-time Grammy Award-winning soprano and the recipient of a 2007 MacArthur Fellowship. She has appeared in hundreds of performances at the Metropolitan Opera since she began her career there, in 1984, and has premièred original works by composers including John Harbison, John Adams, Kaija Saariaho, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Her recording of Henryk Górecki's Symphony No. 3 has sold more than a million copies. In 2005, she released "Ayre," a recording of contemporary settings of folk songs by the Argentinean composer Osvaldo Golijov.



Stephen Colbert

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Festival HQ

Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th Street

In addition to the Festival programs and book signings that are listed in the program guide, HQ hosts special appearances, sponsor giveaways, and ongoing promotions.

Right to Vote Campaign
Be sure to register to vote in time for the coming elections. In partnership with the New York City Board of Elections, the Festival's Right to Vote Campaign will feature a staffed registration booth throughout the weekend.

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Ticket Sales
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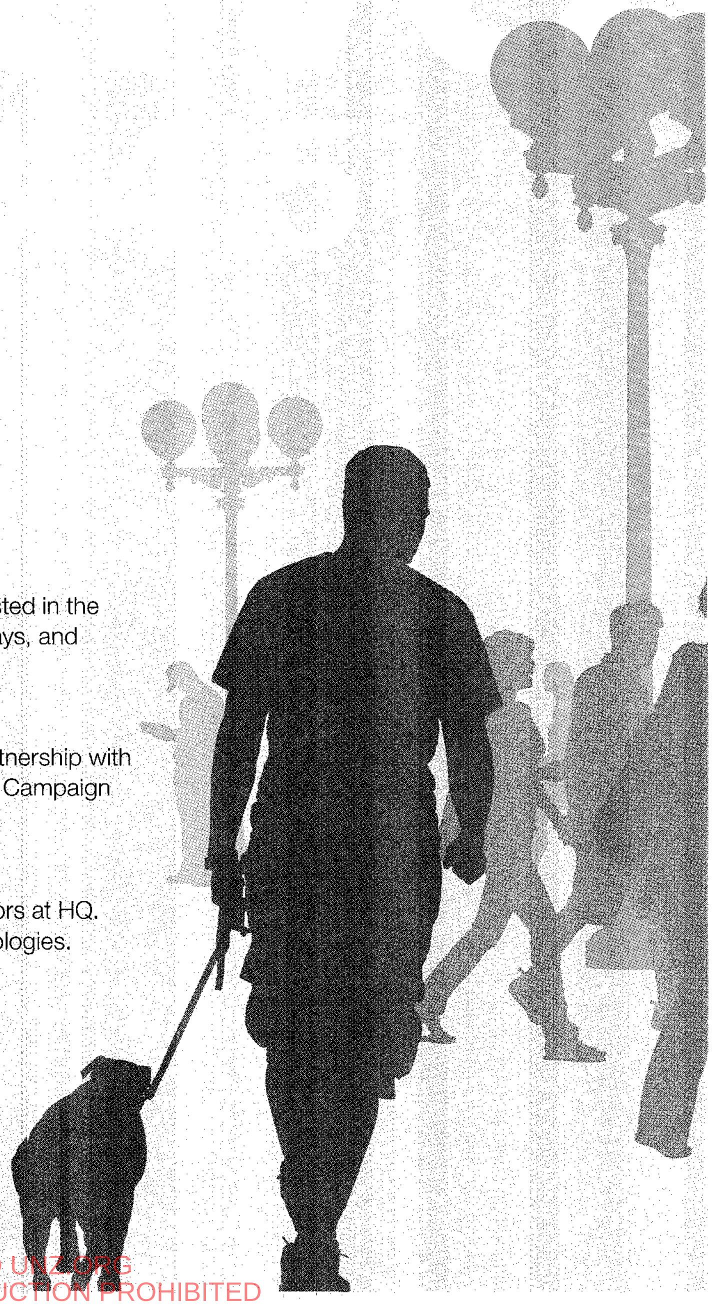
HQ Hours
Friday from 12 noon to 4 P.M.
Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 A.M. to 5 P.M.



Saturday | October 4 | 2008

Alex Ross has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1993 and is the magazine's music critic. He covers classical music, from Mozart to Steve Reich, and has written articles about Bob Dylan, Radiohead, and Björk. His first book, "The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century," won the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism.

7:30 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater, Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street
(Please note: this event will not feature musical performance.)

Stephen Colbert talks with Ariel Levy

Moment of truthiness.

Stephen Colbert is the creator and host of the Emmy-nominated, Peabody Award-winning show "The Colbert Report." He is the author of the New York *Times* best-seller "I Am America (And So Can You!)." He received three Emmy Awards as a writer on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," where he was also a correspondent. Last year, he briefly ran for President of the United States.

Ariel Levy wrote for *New York* for twelve years before joining *The New Yorker* as a staff writer this year. She is the author of "Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture," which came out in 2005.

7:30 P.M. Cathedral NYC
504 West 41st Street

Worst Nightmares Part 1: Horror Movies

With **Wes Craven** and **Hideo Nakata**.
Moderated by **Ben Greenman**.

Wes Craven is the creator of the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series and the director of the "Scream" trilogy. He made his first film, "The Last House on the Left," in 1972, and has since directed more than twenty feature films, including "The Hills Have Eyes," "The Serpent and the Rainbow," "The People Under the Stairs," and "Shocker." His new movie, "25/8," about the son of a serial killer, will appear next year.

Hideo Nakata is a Japanese director, who popularized the genre known as J-horror. His film "Ringu" was the most successful horror film in Japanese history and spawned an American remake, "The Ring." He followed "Ringu" with "Ringu 2" and directed "Chaos," "Dark Water," "Kaidan," and the documentary "Sadistic and Masochistic." In 2004, he made his American début, with "The Ring Two." His most recent film, "L: Change the World," was released in Japan this year.

Ben Greenman is the Goings On About Town editor of *The New Yorker.* He is the author of two story collections, "A Circle Is a Balloon and Compass Both: Stories About Human Love" and "Superbad," and the novels "Superworse" and "Please Step Back," which is out in September.

7:30 P.M. IFC Center
323 Sixth Avenue

Late Shift

Tom Morello talks with James Surowiecki

One-man revolution.

Tom Morello is the guitarist of Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave. *Rolling Stone* named him one of the 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time, and he is featured in the video game Guitar Hero III. He is a co-founder of Axis of Justice, which brings together musicians, fans, and political organizations to fight for social justice. He recently released a duet with Bruce Springsteen, performing "The Ghost of Tom Joad." A solo album released under the moniker of the Nightwatchman, "The Fabled City," is out in September.

James Surowiecki has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2000 and writes the magazine's Financial Page. His book, "The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Businesses, Economies, Societies, and Nations," was published in 2004.

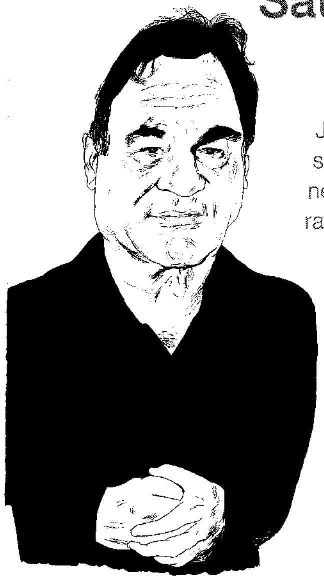
10 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street
(Please note: this event will feature musical performance.)

Mary-Louise Parker talks with John Colapinto

High times.

Mary-Louise Parker has received a Golden Globe for her role in the Showtime series "Weeds," an Emmy and a Golden Globe for HBO's "Angels in America," and Emmy nominations for "The West Wing" and the TV movie "The Robber Bride." Her film credits include "Fried Green Tomatoes," "Boys on the Side," and "Romance and Cigarettes." She won a Tony for her role in "Proof" and received Tony nominations for her performances in "Prelude to a Kiss" and "Reckless."

Dawn Upshaw



Oliver Stone

John Colapinto has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2006. His recent subjects include Paul McCartney, Rick Owens, and the Pirahã tribe of the Brazilian rain forest. He is the author of "As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl" and the novel "About the Author."

10 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater,
Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

Oliver Stone talks with David Denby
Citizen Stone.

Oliver Stone, a native New Yorker and decorated Vietnam veteran, studied with Martin Scorsese and won his first Academy Award in 1978, for the screenplay of "Midnight Express." He received his second Oscar in 1986 for the film "Platoon." With "Born on the Fourth of July," his third Oscar winner, and "Heaven & Earth," he completed his Vietnam trilogy. His other films include "Wall Street," "The Doors," "JFK," "Natural Born Killers," "Nixon," "Any Given Sunday," and "World Trade Center." His new film, "W.," based on the life of George W. Bush, will be released in mid-October.

David Denby is a film critic at *The New Yorker*. He is the author of "Great Books," about reading the literary canon, and "American Sucker," a memoir of his misadventures in investing; parts of both books first appeared in the magazine. His next book, coming out in January, is an attack on the growth of snark in the media.

10 P.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

Worst Nightmares Part 2: "Fear(s) of the Dark"

Following a special screening of the new animated film "Fear(s) of the Dark," a compendium of animated shorts about phobias, **Charles Burns** and **Lorenzo Mattotti**, two of the film's directors, will talk with **Françoise Mouly.**

Charles Burns is a cartoonist and illustrator, and a contributor to *The New Yorker*. His award-winning graphic novel "Black Hole" is being adapted for film by the director David Fincher. His other books include "El Borbah," "Big Baby," and "Skin Deep."

Lorenzo Mattotti is a graphic artist. In 2003, he won an Eisner Award for his comic-book adaptation of "Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde." His other comic albums include "Fires," "The Man at the Window," "Stigmates," and "Caboto," which was commissioned by the Spanish government for the quincentennial of Columbus's voyage to America. He has contributed illustrations and cover art to *The New Yorker*.

Françoise Mouly is the art editor of *The New Yorker* and the founder and co-editor of *RAW*, which first published Charles Burns and Lorenzo Mattotti in the early eighties. She recently launched TOON Books, a new imprint of hardcover comics for beginning readers.

10 P.M. IFC Center
323 Sixth Avenue

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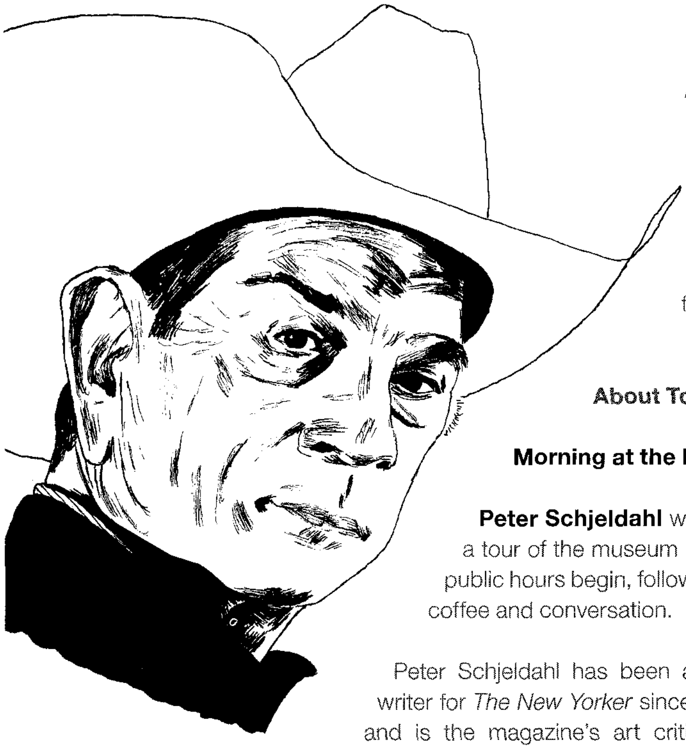


Tommy Lee Jones

A day of About Town excursions and events throughout the city; talks by *New Yorker* writers; interviews with Tommy Lee Jones and Haruki Murakami; a series of master classes in political cartooning, humor writing, and literary criticism; and book signings at Festival HQ. Tickets for About Town events vary in price and are listed in the program notes below. Master Classes are $35. All other daytime events, unless otherwise indicated below, are $25. A complete list of ticket prices can be found in the schedule, on pages 31 and 32 of the guide.

About Town

Morning at the Frick

Peter Schjeldahl will lead a tour of the museum before public hours begin, followed by coffee and conversation.

Peter Schjeldahl has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1998 and is the magazine's art critic. He has received the Frank Jewett Mather Award from the College Art Association, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and this year's Clark Prize for Excellence in Arts Writing. He is the author of several books of criticism, including "Let's See: Writings on Art from The New Yorker," which came out in May.

10 A.M. $65
Frick Collection
1 East 70th Street

Come Hungry

Calvin Trillin will lead his eighth gastronomic walking tour of Chinatown and Little Italy, with stops at some of his favorite eateries along the way, and culminating in a dim-sum feast.

Calvin Trillin has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* for more than forty years. He has published twenty-five books, among them comic novels, satirical verse, and writings on food, including "The Tummy Trilogy" and "Feeding a Yen: Savoring Local Specialties, from Kansas City to Cuzco." His memoir "About Alice," part of which first appeared in the magazine, came out in 2006. His piece "Three Chopsticks," on the street food of Singapore, appeared in the 2007 Food Issue.

11 A.M. $100
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the starting point.

Inside the Artist's Studio

John Currin will conduct a tour of his studio, followed by brunch and conversation with **Calvin Tomkins**.

John Currin is a figurative painter whose work has drawn on everything from Renaissance oil paintings to online pornography. He first gained attention in the late eighties for a series of paintings based on profiles from his high-school yearbook. His work has been featured in more than twenty solo exhibitions, including retrospectives at the Whitney Museum and Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, and is in the permanent collections of the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the Tate.

Calvin Tomkins has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1960 and covers art and cultural affairs for the magazine. His books include "The Bride and the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde," "Living Well Is the Best Revenge," "Duchamp: A Biography," and "Off the Wall: A Portrait of Robert Rauschenberg." His new book, "Lives of the Artists," which comes out in October, will include his *New Yorker* Profile of John Currin, "Lifting the Veil," from the January 28th issue.

11 A.M. $80
Ticket buyers will be contacted concerning the location.

Presto Change-o

Matthew Holtzclaw, **Charles Reynolds**, **Jamy Ian Swiss**, and **Johnny Thompson** will join **Adam Gopnik** for a morning of illusions and conversation. Refreshments will be served.

Matthew Holtzclaw is a New York-based magician and playwright. He has appeared in "Monday Night Magic," in New York, and "The Magic Circle," in London, and has worked as a magic consultant for Penn & Teller and Marco Tempest. He is the author of the plays "Red Head" and "Cane's Bayou," and has consulted on magic effects for several theatrical productions, including Teller's production of "Macbeth."

Charles Reynolds was the magic director of “Blackstone!,” which was nominated for a Drama Desk Award, and has been a magic consultant on such Broadway shows as “Merlin,” “Sleight of Hand,” “Into the Woods,” and, most recently, “Young Frankenstein.” He worked for many years for Doug Henning, whose 1976 televised special “World of Magic” won an Emmy. He is the author of several books, including “100 Years of Magic Posters,” which he wrote with his wife, Regina Reynolds.

Jamy Ian Swiss is a producer of “Monday Night Magic,” New York’s longest-running Off Broadway magic show, and the star of “Magic: Close-up in Concert,” which he performed at the Rainbow Room. He was a writer and producer for Penn & Teller’s “Sin City Spectacular” and is the head writer for Marco Tempest’s “The Virtual Magician.” His books include “Shattering Illusions: Essays on the Ethics, History, and Presentation of Magic.”

Johnny Thompson is a Las Vegas-based illusionist who performs under the name the Great Tomsoni. He is the recipient of the Society of American Magicians’ Superstar of Magic award, the Grand Prix Magiques de Monte Carlo, and the Masters Fellowship of the Academy of Magical Arts. He has worked as a magic consultant for such magicians as Penn & Teller, Lance Burton, and Criss Angel. He appeared in the 2005 film “The Aristocrats.”

Adam Gopnik has been writing for *The New Yorker* since 1986. He is the author of “Paris to the Moon,” “Through the Children’s Gate,” and “The King in the Window.” “The Real Work,” his piece on modern magic, appeared in the March 17th issue.

11 A.M. $30
Spiegeltent–Salon Perdu
South Street Seaport, North side of Pier 17

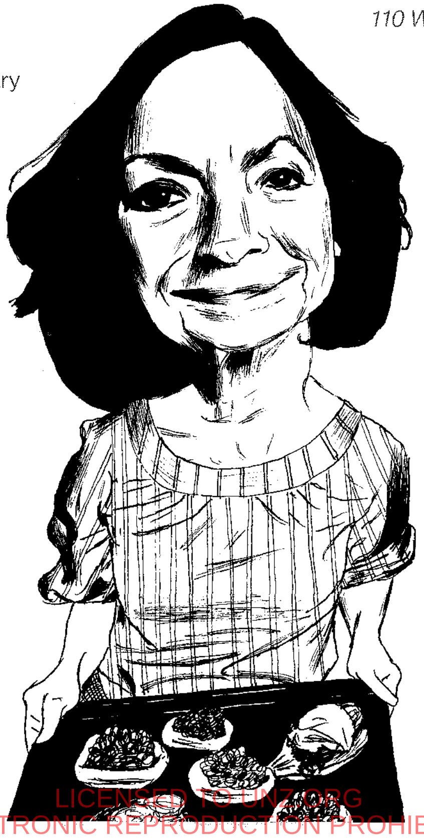
Spice World

Claudia Roden will discuss her latest culinary discoveries with **Jane Kramer**. Tastings of her dishes, with wine pairings, will be served.

Claudia Roden is a cookbook writer who was born in Cairo and is now based in London. Her books, for which she travels to kitchens around the world, include “The New Book of Middle Eastern Food,” “The Food of Italy–Region by Region,” and “The Book of Jewish Food,” which won a James Beard Foundation Award. “Arabesque,” which includes recipes from Morocco, Turkey, and Lebanon, received the André Simon Memorial Fund Award for Best Food Book, the Glenfiddich Best Food Book Award, and the Gourmand World Media Special Award of the Jury.

Jane Kramer has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1966 and writes the magazine’s Letter from Europe. She has published several collections of articles from the magazine, including “Unsettling Europe,” “Europeans,” and “The Politics of Memory.” Her *New Yorker* article “Whose Art Is It?” won the 1993 National Magazine Award and was published as a book. “Spice Routes,” her piece on Claudia Roden, appeared in last year’s Food Issue.

12 noon. $80
Culinary Loft
515 Broadway



Claudia Roden

Writers and Their Subjects

Tommy Lee Jones and Lillian Ross
Man in black.

Tommy Lee Jones made his film début in “Love Story” in 1970. His credits include “Coal Miner’s Daughter,” “JFK,” “The Fugitive,” “Men in Black,” “In the Valley of Elah,” and “No Country for Old Men.” He received Academy Award nominations for “JFK” and “In the Valley of Elah” and he won the award for “The Fugitive.” In 1995, he made his directorial début, with “The Good Old Boys,” and in 2005 he directed “The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada.” His upcoming projects include “In the Electric Mist” and “Islands in the Stream,” which he is adapting from the novel by Ernest Hemingway.

Lillian Ross has been writing for *The New Yorker* for more than six decades. She is the author of twelve books, among them “Portrait of Hemingway,” “Vertical and Horizontal,” and “Here but Not Here.” Her profile of Tommy Lee Jones appeared in the magazine in 1994 and an excerpt was included in her most recent book, “Reporting Back.”

11 A.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

In Conversation With

Haruki Murakami interviewed by Deborah Treisman
Running wild.

Haruki Murakami was born in Kyoto and wrote his first novel, “Hear the Wind Sing,” when he was twenty-nine. Since then, he has published more than ten novels, including “Norwegian Wood,” “The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle,” and “After Dark,” as well as story collections and nonfiction. In 2006, he received the Franz Kafka Prize. His most recent book, “What I Talk About When I Talk About Running,” a memoir, was published in July; parts of it first appeared in the June 9th & 16th Summer Fiction Issue of *The New Yorker.*

Deborah Treisman is the fiction editor of *The New Yorker.*

4 P.M. Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

New Yorker Talks

Paul Theroux
"Reliving 'The Great Railway Bazaar' "

Paul Theroux has contributed both fact and fiction pieces to *The New Yorker* since 1979 and is the author of many books, including novels, travel narratives, and a memoir, "Sir Vidia's Shadow." His 1975 travelogue, "The Great Railway Bazaar," chronicled his four-month journey from the United Kingdom to Japan and back. His new book, "Ghost Train to the Eastern Star," which charts his re-creation of that trip, was published in August.

1 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater, Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

Salman Rushdie
"The Composite Artist: The Emperor Akbar and the Making of the Hamzanama"

Salman Rushdie is the author of ten novels, one collection of short stories, and four works of nonfiction, and the co-editor of "Mirrorwork," an anthology of contemporary Indian literature. His novel "Midnight's Children" won the Booker Prize in 1981, the Booker of Bookers in 1993, and, in 2008, the Best of the Booker. In 2007, he was awarded a knighthood for services to literature. His novel "The Enchantress of Florence" came out in May; parts of it first appeared in *The New Yorker.*

4 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

Master Classes

Political Illustration
With **Barry Blitt** and **Steve Brodner**.

Barry Blitt has contributed illustrations and covers to *The New Yorker* since 1992. He has illustrated many children's books, including "Once Upon a Time, the End," "The 39 Apartments of Ludwig van Beethoven," and "What's the Weather Inside?," which will be published next March.

Steve Brodner is a regular contributor to *The New Yorker.* "The Naked Campaign," his video series on political caricaturing, can be viewed at the magazine's Web site, newyorker.com. His satirical work, which was collected in the book "Freedom Fries," was awarded the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism in 2000. His illustrations are currently on display at the Norman Rockwell Museum, in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

10 A.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

Humor Writing
With **Ian Frazier** and **Mark Singer.**

Ian Frazier has written essays and fact and humor pieces for *The New Yorker* for more than thirty years. He is the author of nine books, including the humor collections "Dating Your Mom," "Coyote v. Acme," and "Lamentations of the Father," which came out in April and contained many of his pieces from the magazine. "Hungry Minds," his piece about the soup kitchen at the Church of the Holy Apostles, appeared in the May 26th issue.

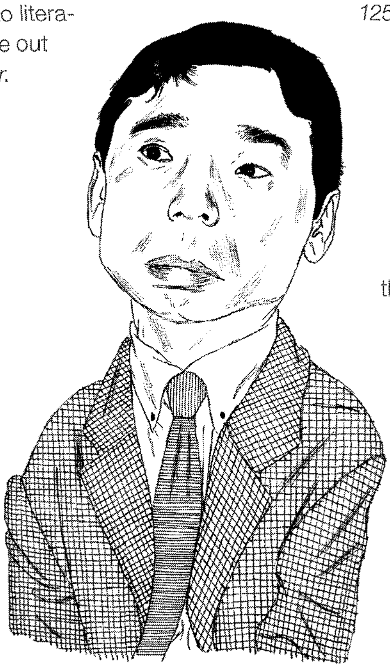
Mark Singer has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1974 and has contributed Profiles, humor, and hundreds of Talk of the Town pieces to the magazine. His books include "Funny Money"; "Mr. Personality," a collection of his *New Yorker* articles; "Somewhere in America," a compilation of his U.S. Journal columns from the magazine; and, most recently, "Character Studies," which includes his *New Yorker* pieces on Ricky Jay, Martin Scorsese, and Donald Trump.

1 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

Literary Criticism
With **James Wood**.

James Wood has contributed criticism to *The New Yorker* since 1996 and became a staff writer last year. He is the author of three books of criticism: "The Broken Estate," "The Irresponsible Self," and "How Fiction Works," which came out in July, as well as a novel, "The Book Against God." He is the Professor of the Practice of Literary Criticism at Harvard University.

4 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street



Haruki Murakami

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Select events will be available for viewing at **newyorker.com**. For event announcements and Web schedules, visit **festival.newyorker.com** and sign up for Festival Wire.

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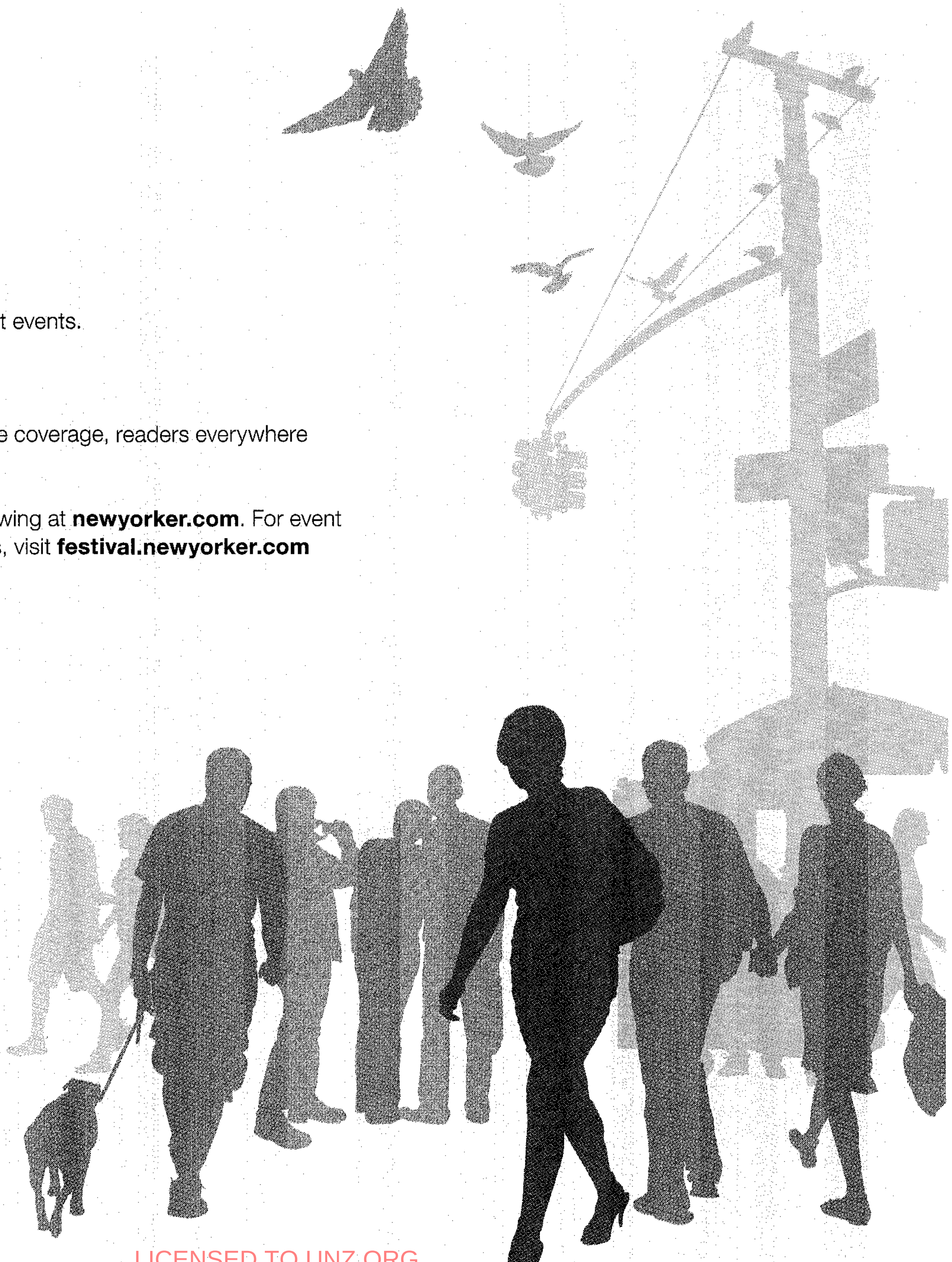

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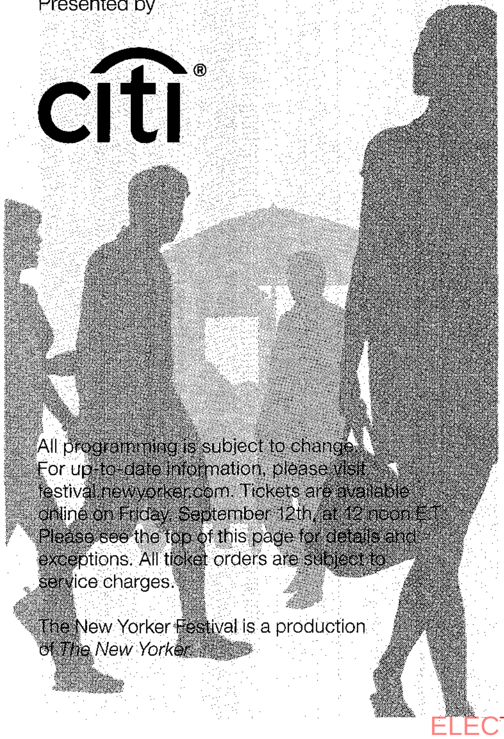

All programming is subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit festival.newyorker.com. Tickets are available online on Friday, September 12th, at 12 noon E.T. Please see the top of this page for details and exceptions. All ticket orders are subject to service charges.

The New Yorker Festival is a production of *The New Yorker*.

How to Purchase Tickets

Tickets for The New Yorker Festival will go on sale at 12 noon E.T. on Friday, September 12th. There are several ways to purchase tickets:

Online: Get tickets at festival.newyorker.com.*

By phone: Call 800-440-6974.*

At Festival HQ: Ten per cent of tickets to all events will be available during Festival weekend at Metropolitan Pavilion, at 125 West 18th Street (between Sixth and Seventh Avenues). Tickets will be sold on Friday, October 3rd, from 12 noon to 4 P.M., and on Saturday, October 4th, from 9:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. First come, first served.

At the door: A limited number of tickets will be sold at the door to each event one hour before start time, with the exception of A Governors Island Bike Tour, Morning at the Frick, Come Hungry, Inside the Artist's Studio, and Spice World. First come, first served. Cash only.

Advance tickets for The New Yorker Town Hall Meeting on Friday night are available only at ticketmaster.com**, at all ***ticketmaster outlets in the New York metropolitan area, at the Town Hall box office, or by calling 212-307-7171.

Book Signings at Festival HQ

Saturday

11 A.M.
Joyce Carol Oates – "My Sister, My Love: The Intimate Story of Skyler Rampike"
Tobias Wolff – "Our Story Begins: New and Selected Stories"

12 noon
Roddy Doyle – "The Deportees: And Other Stories"
Anne Enright – "Yesterday's Weather: Stories"

1 P.M.
Alice Munro – "The View from Castle Rock"
Haruki Murakami – "What I Talk About When I Talk About Running: A Memoir"

2 P.M.
Sana Krasikov – "One More Year: Stories"
Manil Suri – "The Age of Shiva: A Novel"

3 P.M.
Peter Carey – "His Illegal Self"
Paul Theroux – "Ghost Train to the Eastern Star: On the Tracks of the Great Railway Bazaar"

4 P.M.
Robert Mankoff – "The New Yorker Cartoon Caption Contest Book"
Susan Orlean – "Lazy Little Loafers"

Sunday

11 A.M.
Hari Kunzru – "My Revolutions"
Jhumpa Lahiri – "Unaccustomed Earth"

12 noon
Richard Brody – "Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard"
John Seabrook – "Flash of Genius: And Other True Stories of Invention"

1 P.M.
Salman Rushdie – "The Enchantress of Florence"
Art Spiegelman – "Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&*!" and "Jack and the Box"

2 P.M.
Peter Schjeldahl – "Let's See: Writings on Art from The New Yorker"
James Wood – "How Fiction Works"

3 P.M.
Lynda Barry – "What It Is"
Steve Brodner – "Artists Against the War"

4 P.M.
John McWhorter – "Our Magnificent Bastard Tongue: The Untold Story of English"

Venues

Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
547 West 26th Street

Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance
405 West 55th Street

Angel Orensanz Foundation
172 Norfolk Street

Cathedral NYC
504 West 41st Street

Culinary Loft
515 Broadway

Directors Guild of America
110 West 57th Street

Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion
125 West 18th Street

Frick Collection
1 East 70th Street

Governors Island Ferry Terminal
Battery Maritime Building
10 South Street, Slip 7

Hiro Ballroom and Lounge
88 Ninth Avenue
(Please note: you must be 21 to be admitted to this venue.)

IFC Center
323 Sixth Avenue

New York Society for Ethical Culture
2 West 64th Street

Spiegeltent–Salon Perdu
South Street Seaport, North side of Pier 17

Stuyvesant High School
345 Chambers Street

Town Hall
123 West 43rd Street
(Advance tickets for The New Yorker Town Hall Meeting are available only at ticketmaster.com, at all **ticketmaster** *outlets in the New York metropolitan area, at the Town Hall box office, or by calling 212-307-7171.)*

Festival HQ

Is your favorite event sold out? Head to Festival HQ, at Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th Street (between Sixth and Seventh Avenues). There you can:

Purchase last-minute tickets. Tickets to ALL events will be sold at Festival HQ on Friday, October 3rd, and Saturday, October 4th.

Purchase books by *New Yorker* writers and artists and Festival participants.

Attend book signings and other Festival events, as listed.

Get additional information on Festival programs.

Festival HQ will be open on Friday, October 3rd, from 12 noon to 4 P.M., on Saturday, October 4th, from 9:30 A.M. to 5 P.M., and on Sunday, October 5th, from 9:30 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Schedule

Friday | October 3

Fiction Night | Discussions Among Writers
Writing About Home
7 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre ($25)

The Devil Within
7 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)

The American Dream
7 P.M. Angel Orensanz Foundation ($25)

Family Secrets
9:30 P.M. Acura Stage
at Cedar Lake Theatre ($25)

Outlaws
9:30 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)

Where I Come From
9:30 P.M. Angel Orensanz Foundation ($25)

Fiction Night | In Conversation With
Alice Munro
interviewed by Deborah Treisman
8 P.M. Directors Guild of America ($25)

The New Yorker Town Hall Meeting
Race and Class in America
7 P.M. Town Hall ($20)

Casual Friday
The Cartoon Caption Game
8 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($25)

A New Yorker Dance Party
10 P.M. Hiro Ballroom and Lounge ($25)

Saturday | October 4

Writers and Their Subjects
Alexei Ratmansky and Joan Acocella
1 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre ($25)

Clint Eastwood and Lillian Ross
1 P.M. Directors Guild of America ($25)

Richard Brody on the films of
Jean-Luc Godard
4 P.M. IFC Center ($25)

In Conversation With
Jean-Michel Dubernard
interviewed by Atul Gawande
10 A.M. Acura Stage
at Cedar Lake Theatre ($25)

Seamus Heaney
interviewed by Paul Muldoon
1 P.M. New York Society for Ethical Culture
($25)

Chuck Hagel
interviewed by Ryan Lizza
4 P.M. Acura Stage at Cedar Lake Theatre
($25)

Elizabeth Edwards
interviewed by Atul Gawande
4 P.M. New York Society for Ethical Culture
($25)

Lynda Barry
in conversation with Matt Groening
4 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($25)

New Yorker Talks
Malcolm Gladwell
2 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)

Art Spiegelman
4:30 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)

Panels
If I Were Running This Campaign
10 A.M. Directors Guild of America ($25)

Extreme Sports
10 A.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($25)

Covering the Candidates
10 A.M. Cathedral NYC ($25)

The Next Generation of Fashion
1 P.M. Cathedral NYC ($25)

The Campaign Trail
1 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($25)

Political Humor
4 P.M. Cathedral NYC ($25)

Young Shakespeareans
4 P.M. Directors Guild of America ($25)

About Town
A Governors Island Bike Tour
11 A.M. Governors Island Ferry Terminal
($80)

Early Shift
Saturday Night Sneak Preview:
"Frontrunners"
6:30 P.M. Stuyvesant High School ($25)

Paul Rudd talks with Michael Specter
7:30 P.M. Acura Stage
at Cedar Lake Theatre ($35)

Dawn Upshaw talks with Alex Ross
7:30 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($35)

Stephen Colbert talks with Ariel Levy
7:30 P.M. Cathedral NYC ($35)

Worst Nightmares Part 1:
Horror Movies
7:30 P.M. IFC Center ($35)

Late Shift
Tom Morello
talks with James Surowiecki
10 P.M. Acura Stage
at Cedar Lake Theatre ($35)

Mary-Louise Parker
talks with John Colapinto
10 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($35)

Oliver Stone talks with David Denby
10 P.M. Directors Guild of America ($35)

Worst Nightmares Part 2:
"Fear(s) of the Dark"
10 P.M. IFC Center ($25)

Sunday | October 5

About Town
Morning at the Frick
10 A.M. Frick Collection ($65)

Come Hungry
11 A.M. Ticket buyers will be contacted
concerning the starting point. ($100)

Inside the Artist's Studio
11 A.M. Ticket buyers will be contacted
concerning the location. ($80)

Presto Change-o
11 A.M. Spiegeltent–Salon Perdu ($30)

Spice World
12 noon. Culinary Loft ($80)

Writers and Their Subjects
Tommy Lee Jones and Lillian Ross
11 A.M. Directors Guild of America ($25)

In Conversation With
Haruki Murakami
interviewed by Deborah Treisman
4 P.M. Directors Guild of America ($25)

New Yorker Talks
Paul Theroux
1 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)

Salman Rushdie
4 P.M. Ailey Citigroup Theater
Joan Weill Center for Dance ($25)

Master Classes
Political Illustration
10 A.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($35)

Humor Writing
1 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($35)

Literary Criticism
4 P.M. Festival HQ
Metropolitan Pavilion ($35)

Production services provided by the Overland Entertainment Company.

All programming is subject to change. For up-to-date information, please visit festival.newyorker.com. Tickets available at 12 noon E.T. on September 12th, at festival.newyorker.com or by calling 800-440-6974. Tickets will also be sold during Festival weekend at Festival HQ, at Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 West 18th Street, and at event doors. For details and exceptions, please see page 30 of the guide. Please note that purchases are subject to service charges.

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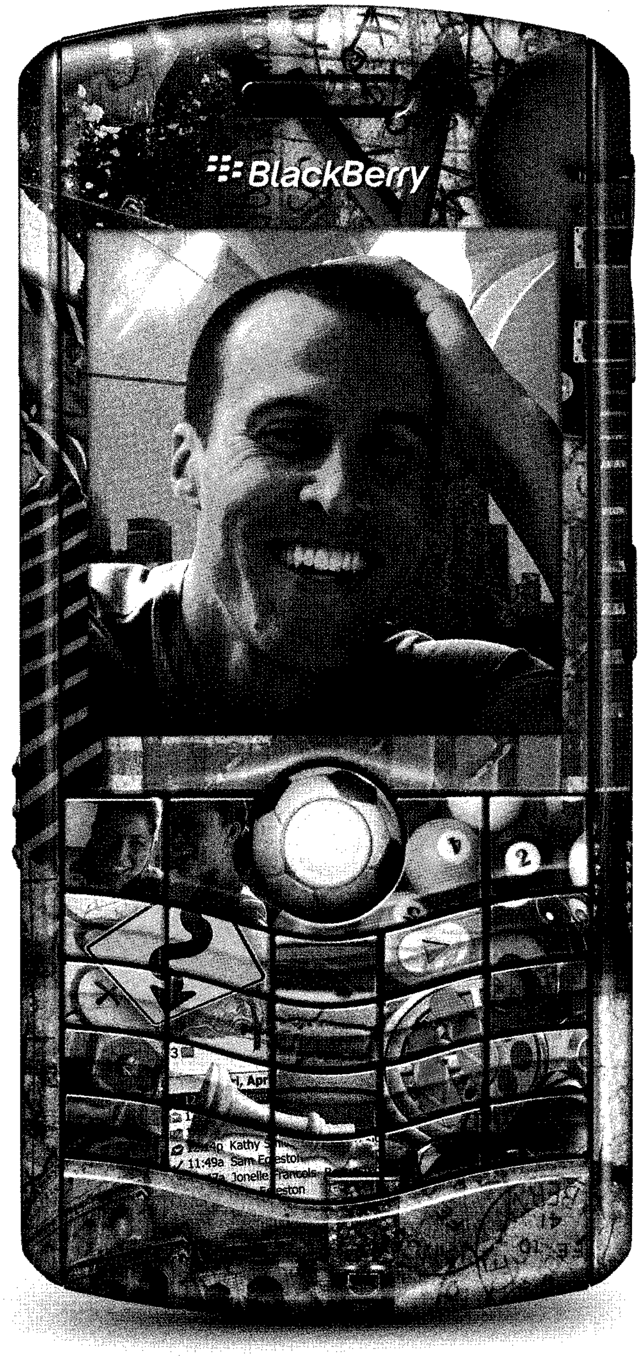

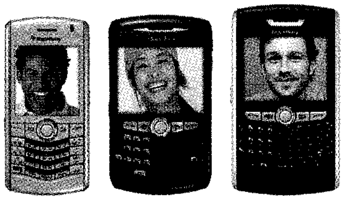

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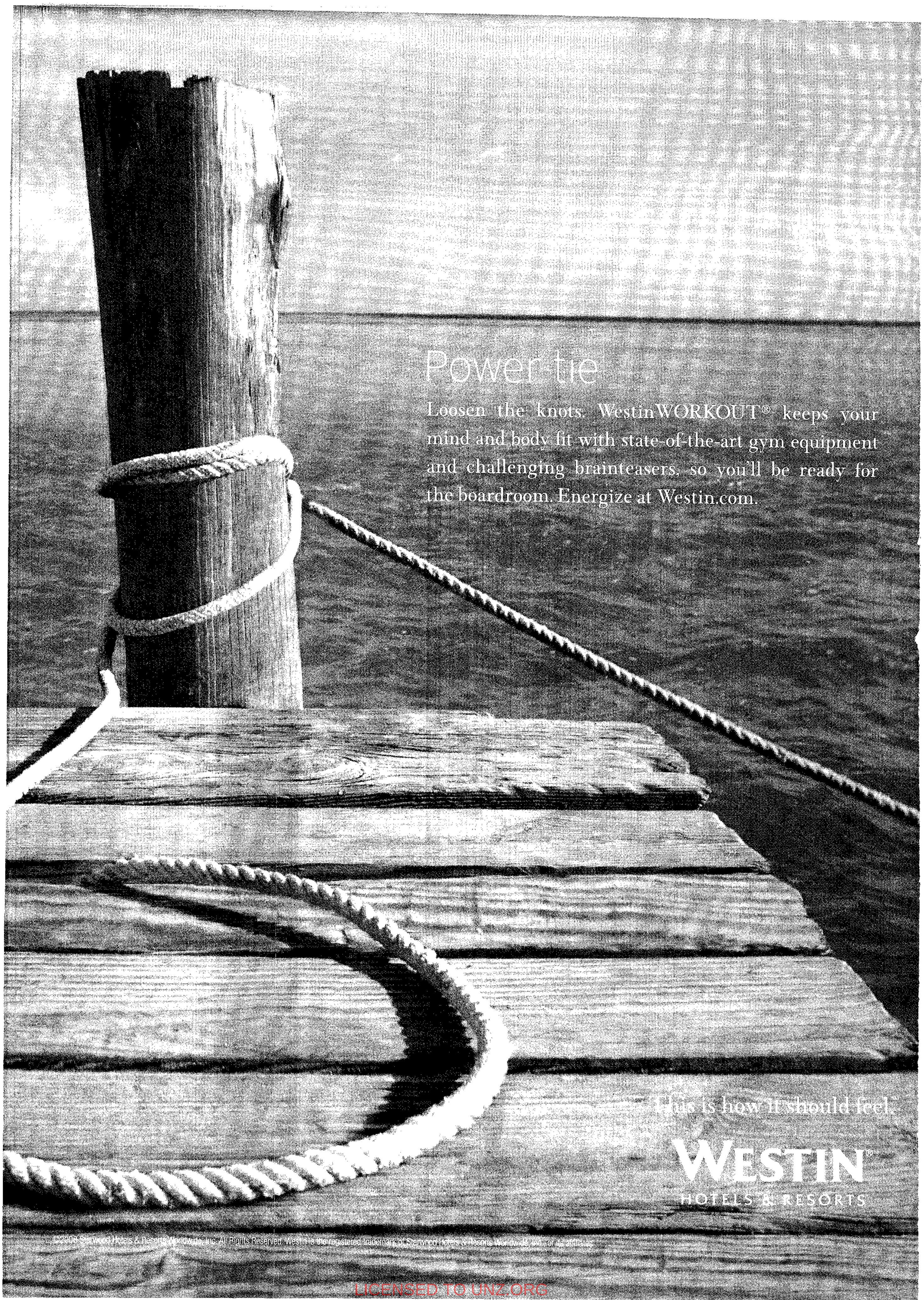
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what a hero is, and certainly I did not mean to hurt the family or impugn his reputation."

The question of what actually killed James Zadroga is one that public officials appear reluctant to answer candidly, and, increasingly, the debate surrounding the case seems to be less about scientific evidence than about public feeling. This is the view of Brian Monahan, a sociologist at Iowa State University who is working on a book on 9/11. "After 9/11, we suddenly had emerging all these perfect heroes, who stood against bin Laden, the perfect villain," he said, observing that Zadroga was also a natural icon: young, the first to die, a father. Aligning oneself with a hero, he added, is a convenient way to manage the chaos of a complicated event, and to present a point of view that can't be argued with. In that sense, he said, Zadroga was a valuable figure for politicians, 9/11 groups, and police unions—"anyone with a vested interest in how 9/11 illness was going to be treated."

When I spoke with Representative Maloney, she acknowledged the "confusion" created by Hirsch's finding. But she defended the idea that Zadroga's time at Ground Zero ultimately precipitated his decline, and the bill she introduced, the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, is still making its way through Congress. Regardless of what eventually happened, Maloney argued, "James Zadroga would still be alive if not for 9/11."

The truth of this is hard to gauge. Four months after meeting with Joe, I wrote to the Zadrogas' lawyer, who agreed to fax me a copy of the results of James's 2003 biopsy, the one that Joe had said showed extensive lung damage. The document that arrived was eight pages long: a comprehensive report on the various tests and their findings. But its import was unequivocal. The lungs had only minor abnormalities and showed no evidence of talc or cellulose. When I contacted a pathologist unconnected with the case to ask whether this could have been an oversight, he scoffed, explaining that, under the polarized light that labs use to spot foreign particulate matter, such particles shine out like stars in the night sky. Had the material Breton found in Zadroga's lungs in 2006 been there in 2003, it would have lit up the lab.

A few days after receiving the biopsy report, I contacted Dr. Philip Landrigan, the physician who oversees Mt. Sinai's World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program. Landrigan has spent the past seven years tracking the health of twenty-five thousand workers and volunteers exposed to the dust cloud at Ground Zero and advocating additional funding for treatment and research. Zadroga's celebrity, he acknowledged, had helped advance the political cause of 9/11 survivors by "putting a human face on the statistics." When I asked whether this development might now create problems—whether there could be a backlash if it became known that Zadroga's death may not have been caused by exposure at Ground Zero—Landrigan said that he hoped it wouldn't. As for Zadroga's continued fame as the first dust victim, he shrugged it off. "It is what it is," he said. "It's a fact at this point."

But, while the biopsy sheds some light on the facts of Zadroga's death, it seems to make the events of his life even murkier. If Zadroga's lungs weren't significantly compromised, why did he undergo a biopsy? And if he wasn't mainlining drugs in early 2003—as the biopsy would indicate—when, and why, did he start?

Before I left Little Egg, Joe gave me a letter that he said James had written on the first anniversary of the attacks, at the behest of Ronda's father, a minister. It was morbid and bleak. Recalling his time at the towers, Zadroga described a landscape strewn with human remains: an ear fringed with hair, a dismembered foot. A year later, he reported that his health was bad—"I can't breathe, my throat is constantly sore, I'm always coughing," he wrote—and that he remained deeply troubled by his days at Ground Zero, plagued by nightmares, sleeplessness, and anxiety. Zadroga's memories seemed to overshadow even the birth of his first child, and he apparently saw himself as doomed. "Everyone praises the dead as heroes, as they should, but there are more living suffering than dead," he wrote. "The dead, their deaths were quick and painless, and mine has just begun." ♦

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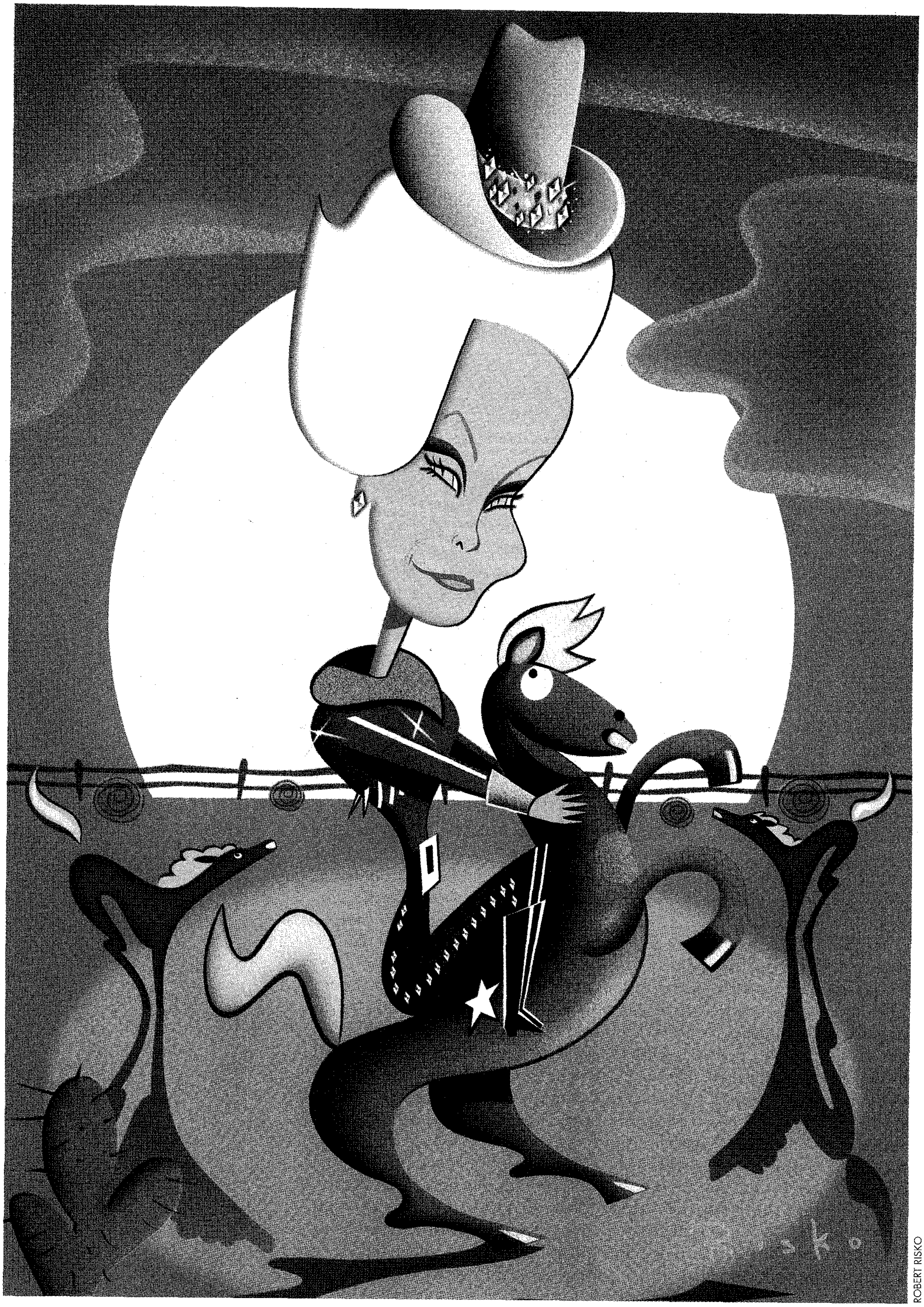
Tickets go on sale Friday,
September 12th, at 12 noon E.T.

For more information,
visit **festival.newyorker.com**.



ROBERT RISKO

THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE LONESOME TRAIL

Cindy McCain's nontraditional campaign.

BY ARIEL LEVY

Earlier this year, at a town-hall meeting at the Fantasy of Flight aircraft museum, in Polk City, Florida, Cindy McCain introduced her husband, the Republican Presidential nominee, with a speech about the nature of "the man." There are, she said, many things "that make a great man, but being a good father and a good husband are most important to me." She wore a tight black leather blazer over a black turtleneck, and her hair was styled stiffly in a ponytail. "I was working one day, one day a long, long time ago, in Bangladesh," McCain said. "I stumbled upon a little girl in Mother Teresa's orphanage, and she had a really bad cleft palate and she was sick and tiny and she was only ten weeks old. And I got to know her a little bit, and I was with her for quite a while. Mother Teresa—as only she could do at that time—prevailed upon me and said, You know, you can get help for her. You could, you can get her out . . . and, being a tenacious woman, I thought, Yeah! I can. Sure."

McCain said that on the flight home from Bangkok she "realized that this child had chosen me and I could not give her up." But there was something even more remarkable: "What you don't know about this story is I didn't tell my husband." McCain smiled mischievously as she said that, and several members of the audience tittered. "I landed in Phoenix, Arizona, with this baby in my arms, and in front of a thousand reporters and a whole lot of people he whispered down to me and said, 'Well, where's she going to go?' And I said, 'I thought she'd come to our house.' And he looked at her and he loved her just the way I have ever since. And I think that says a great deal about the man."

McCain's account of bringing home a daughter without first informing her husband of her decision has become the core of the Cindy stump speech. She revisits the narrative routinely in her brief but frequent campaign appearances, and the Republican National Committee offered a version of it in a video that was played before her speech at the Convention last week. Almost every friend of the McCains with whom I spoke offered his or her own retelling of the tale. It is fact and fable: last month, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that Mother Teresa was not actually at that orphanage at the time of Cindy McCain's visit. (The McCain campaign subsequently revised the story on its Web site.) The story certainly helps to portray John McCain as openhearted and charitable. But it also happens to reflect the nearly separate lives lived by the two McCains, and the peculiar defiance that is characteristic of Cindy—a woman who claims to pride herself on being traditional.

In her size-0 St. John skirt suits, and with her lacquered coiffures, Cindy McCain appears pampered and brittle. She was taken to a hospital with a sprained wrist after a fan shook her hand with too much gusto at a campaign event in Michigan last month. Her movements are quick and sharp—birdlike—and she often seems skittish, wary-eyed, and fidgety, fussing with her nails or her BlackBerry. McCain has said that she kept her phone with her at all times so that she wouldn't miss a call from her son Jimmy, a marine, while he was in Iraq. But he returned in mid-February, and the BlackBerry remains in his mother's hand much of the time. She seems to be vigilant on behalf of all her children: Meghan, twenty-three, a recent Columbia graduate; John Sidney IV, twenty-two, a senior at the U.S. Naval Academy; Jimmy, twenty; and Bridget, the daughter from Bangladesh, who is now seventeen. At times, Cindy McCain seems to be channelling Nancy Reagan in her nervousness and her apparent conviction that without her protection harm will befall her family in the dangerous sphere of public life.

But McCain has unusual grit, too. She has taken up race-car driving and flying, and she has a long history of going on charity missions to Third World countries. According to her spokeswoman, Melissa Shuffield, McCain spends between two and three weeks a year travelling with Operation Smile, an organization that provides surgery for children with cleft palates, and the Halo Trust, a group that removes land mines from countries still riddled with unexploded ordnance. Like her husband, however, she does not support an international ban on land mines. "As much as I know her, I don't get in any big political discussions with Cindy or intellectual discussions about poverty," Dr. Bill Magee, the co-founder of Operation Smile, said. "It's more like, What can we do for these kids today? People have a great time. It brings together the risk-taker with the compassionate. If you take a look at Cindy, she does crazy things in terms of most people's idea of normal." Magee went on to talk about McCain's race-car driving, and offered his version of her decision to adopt Bridget: "She's on the tarmac, she's got this impoverished black kid with a hole in the roof of her mouth, and John says, 'Fine!' It's crazy."

When I travelled with the campaign in late spring, I asked the McCains, who were seated on the curved banquette at the back of the Straight Talk Express, how they imagined Cindy's role as First Lady might affect her humanitarian work.

"I think some of her travels might be curtailed," Senator McCain, who was wearing a blue Navy baseball cap, replied. "She's been to Cambodia, where

"If you look at Cindy," the co-founder of one of her charities says, "she does crazy things in terms of most people's idea of normal."

land mines are very dangerous, and no one knows exactly where they are, so that may be a little bit of a downside of her involvement."

Staring into the middle distance, as she often does, Cindy McCain proceeded to contradict her husband. "What I tell everyone is, regardless of whether we win or lose, I will continue to do what I do because it's so important to be an example," she said firmly. "To my own children, and also for other kids in the community. Regardless of whether we win or lose."

"Stop saying that," John McCain interrupted.

"Say 'when we win,' " Janet Huckabee instructed. She and her husband, the former Arkansas governor and Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, were travelling with the campaign that day.

Cindy McCain gave a flicker of a smirk. "When we win," she said. And she didn't say anything more.

The streets of Phoenix sound as if they were named by a movie cowboy: Camelback, Copperhead, Buckeye. The famously dry heat hurts your eyes and chaps your lips and makes you wonder about the sort of person who elects to endure it. Cindy McCain "is very strong and independent," Sharon Harper, who has been a friend and neighbor of McCain's for more than twenty years, told me. Harper is a commercial real-estate developer in Phoenix, with whom Cindy has invested in two properties. "There's something very special about the West," she said. "There's a real tradition of independence here. I don't know if you've read Sandra Day O'Connor's book about growing up on the Lazy B?"—an Arizona cattle ranch. "Cindy's that kind of woman. People are supposed to be strong and independent growing up here; it's an expectation."

McCain has a complex relationship with independence—a quality that many people attribute to her. "I'm a stay-at-home mother," McCain told voters at a town-hall meeting in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in 1999, when John McCain was running against George W. Bush, who was then governor of Texas. "I don't like labels, but, if there's a label for me, it would be 'traditional,' and I'm very proud to be traditional." Last December, in an interview with the *Arizona Republic*, her hometown paper, she said, "I think the American people truly still want a traditional family in the White House."

In that interview, she added that she was "reluctant to get involved" in this year's Presidential race because of the treatment that her family received in 2000. "You can see the toe marks in the sand where I was brought on board," as she put it. She was referring to what happened after McCain won the New Hampshire primary by a nineteen-point margin: the McCains were subjected to a smear campaign in the days leading up to the South Carolina primary. Anonymous calls and "push-polling," believed to be the inspiration of Karl Rove, convinced many voters there that Bridget was John McCain's illegitimate daughter. Rove and the Bush campaign always denied involvement, but McCain lost, and Cindy McCain wept in front of reporters.

It's possible, though, that Cindy McCain's reluctance to enter this race also had to do with the fact that her family is not actually that traditional—far less traditional, in fact, than the Obamas. Since childhood, McCain has been expected to embody certain pillars of conventional femininity: beauty, refinement, altruism, and an inclination to encourage the ambitious men in her life. She is probably better suited to this particular formulation of public wifehood than the outspoken, muscular, and frankly powerful Michelle Obama. But, if you watch her closely, from time to time you can see Cindy McCain slip out of character.

Cindy Lou Hensley was born in 1954 and grew up on North Central Avenue in Phoenix, a street lined with pepper trees and large adobe-style houses with salmon- or sand-colored stucco façades. That street remained the axis of her life for fifty years. The house at 7110, where Cindy was brought up by her parents, James and Marguerite Hensley—and where, years later, she reared her own children—is a long, low ranch-style house, comparable in size to the small strip malls that are occupied by tanning salons and dry cleaners a few blocks to the south. The house is imposing, with four bucking-horse statues around a fountain on the front lawn (Cindy had horses of her own, which used to be stabled in the back yard), but it is not obvious that this was once the home of one of the richest men in Arizona.

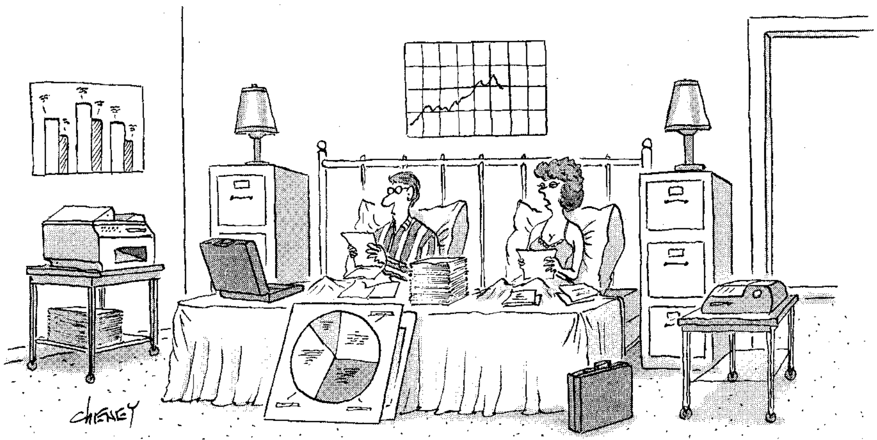
"When I was growing up and when Cindy was growing up, Phoenix was a small town," McCain's friend Betsey Bayless, the former Arizona secretary of state, who grew up in the same neigh-

"That's right—keep that same wistful smile we had on the profile!"

borhood, said. "Now the place has just exploded." The Hensleys, she continued, "were well known because they had a beer distributorship, but there was no such thing as being socially prominent—any business owner was as socially prominent as you get in small-town Phoenix."

James—whom everyone called Jim—and his brother Eugene Hensley built their wealth on alcohol. After Jim returned from service as a bombardier in the Second World War, the brothers entered the wholesale liquor market and began operating two warehouses—United Sales Company, in Phoenix, and United Distributors, Inc., in Tucson—in partnership with Kemper Marley, Sr., a Phoenix businessman. (Police reportedly suspected Marley of having had a hand in the 1976 murder of Don Bolles, a reporter for the *Arizona Republic* who had written extensively about Marley's business and political machinations. Marley died in 1990.) In 1948, the Hensleys were convicted on federal conspiracy charges after filing more than twelve hundred fake invoices to cover up under-the-table sales of liquor to night clubs and bars throughout the state. Eugene was sentenced to a year in prison, Jim to six months, but, with the help of their lawyer, a former mayor of Phoenix, Jim had his sentence suspended.

Despite his criminal conviction, in 1955 Jim Hensley was granted a liquor license to start an Anheuser-Busch distributorship, which he called Hensley & Company. Hensley was the first Anheuser-Busch distributor to invest in refrigerated warehouses, which are now an industry standard. "Jim was always willing to take that first step that perhaps other businesses weren't," Robert Delgado, the current C.E.O. of Hensley, told me. Since 1975, when Jim Hensley hired Delgado, the company has grown to be the third-largest Anheuser-Busch wholesale distributor in the nation, and the largest in Arizona, selling twenty-three million cases of beer a year. "Mr. Hensley acquired this business when Phoenix was a small town," Delgado said. "We've had tremendous population growth in the fifty-three years since, and tremendous market-share growth." Delgado said that Hensley now controls approximately sixty per cent of the Arizona beer market.



"So will it always be just an office romance for us?"

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Jim Hensley, who died in 2000, was "the quintessential Western gentleman," in Delgado's opinion. "He was a cowboy, is a good description. A guy who enjoyed horses, loved Arizona, loved everything about the West."

Oliver Harper, a doctor in Phoenix who is married to Cindy's friend Sharon Harper, remembers Hensley as "the Gary Cooper type of larger-than-life, very manly guy." (For many years, the McCains and the Harpers went on an annual family trip to Lake Powell, and the Harpers own the property that abuts the McCains' ranch in Cottonwood, near Sedona.) "Cindy would go on these wonderful vacations with Jim—they'd go on these horse rides where you'd be out and you'd be packing overnight, and you'd be twenty-five miles a day on a horse. When we went to Africa together"—in 1995—"I remember Cindy saying her father had taken her to the Mt. Kenya Safari Club years ago, when she was a little kid. I think they did a lot of father-daughter stuff, the more adventurey, outdoorsy type of stuff, and Cindy loved that."

Cindy attended Central High, where she was the best-dressed girl in school, according to her senior yearbook. In 1968, she was named Junior Rodeo Queen of Arizona. "I could have been a brain surgeon at twelve and my father would not have been as proud of me," she told *Vogue* recently. Her mother, Marguerite, nicknamed Smitty (after her last name, Smith), was "a very refined woman," according to Sharon Harper. "She was polite and always dressed in such a lovely way. She taught Cindy impeccable manners." At the University of Southern California—or the "University of Spoiled Children," as her husband is fond of telling reporters—Cindy pledged the sorority Kappa Alpha Theta, and graduated in 1978, with a master's in education. Her father gave her a Porsche as a graduation present. She crashed it. He replaced the Porsche with a gold Mercedes.

Many of McCain's friends noted that after graduation she took a low-paying job as a special-education teacher at Agua Fria High School, near Phoenix, rather than a more lucrative position at her father's company. McCain, too, frequently refers to his wife's teaching background. She worked at Agua Fria for just one year.

In 1979, Cindy Hensley was on vacation with her parents in Honolulu when, as she has said, "this awfully nice-looking Navy captain in dress whites" started following her around at a cocktail party. John McCain was eighteen years her senior, and a celebrity after five and a half years as a prisoner of the Vietcong in Hanoi. Cindy was taken with this warrior—a different variety of cowboy. "Having a strong father, I wanted an older man," she told *Harper's Bazaar* recently. And there he was. Just over a year after that first meeting, they were married.

"I think John very much saw her as

reclaiming the life he had lost," McCain's friend Pete Lakeland told Robert Timberg, McCain's biographer. "Cindy stood for everything he didn't have in prison. This was the sweet, innocent, pure American dream." Cindy Hensley also came with enormous wealth and useful connections.

When the couple met, John McCain was serving as the Navy's liaison to the U.S. Senate, and he was eager to give up the military—the world he was born into as the son and grandson of Navy admirals—and enter the realm of politics. He signed his Navy discharge papers in 1981, the day that his father was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Soon after he married Cindy, McCain began working for Hensley & Company as the vice-president of public affairs. He was paid to travel around Arizona promoting the company; in the process, he laid the groundwork for his first campaign.

John and Cindy McCain had signed a prenuptial agreement, but Cindy's assets were, from the beginning, crucial to her husband's success. In 1982, she received six hundred and thirty-nine thousand dollars from a Hensley subsidiary. On the very day that John Rhodes, a fifteen-term Republican congressman, announced his retirement, the McCains bought a house in his congressional district. McCain was elected to the Ninety-eighth Congress. Today, the fortune at Cindy McCain's disposal has been estimated at a hundred million dollars, and, according to the *Times,* she owns ten houses.

In 1986, after two terms in the House, McCain won the Senate seat that Barry Goldwater had relinquished. For two years, Cindy McCain attempted to make a life with her husband in Washington. But there were no wide-open spaces, there was no privacy, and the credentials that made Cindy prominent in Phoenix had no value in the capital. She returned to Phoenix to bring up her family; her husband joined them on weekends. That has been the pattern of their lives ever since.

"She was very much a mother—she always relished that designation," her friend Betsey Bayless told me. "She was always driving her carpool, up and down Central Avenue. She really maintained the home fire." Staying in Phoenix was also an assertion of Cindy McCain's determination to remain in her own territory. She moved back into the house she'd grown up in, her children went to private schools on Central Avenue, and the family attended the massive North Phoenix Baptist Church, just a few blocks down the road, an island in a sea of asphalt.

On an outrageously hot day in June, Pastor Dick Stafford was sitting in his office on the ground floor, amid the extensive collection of elephant statuettes that he amassed as a missionary in Africa and Southeast Asia. "It has no political statement," he said. "They have lifelong family relationships—we could learn a lot from elephants." Stafford said that North Phoenix Baptist is "very careful about not taking a partisan stance," and serves a diverse community. "We have some of the most expensive property straight up Central Avenue; we have a large population of multifamily housing, heavy Hispanic population. We're multiethnic, multiracial, multigenerational, and we want all that here in the church on Sunday." (Cindy McCain was brought up as a Congregationalist. John McCain's great-grandfather was an Episcopalian minister. He has never been baptized.) The majority of the congregation opposes abortion, and, of homosexuals, Stafford said, "We would want to help a person who's struggling with any of those life issues find a healthy way to resolve it." (When he was asked for an example of another such life issue, Stafford replied, "Materialism.") The memorial services of both Jim and Marguerite Hensley were held at North Phoenix Baptist. "Cindy's dad's service was quite large, because of his business connections," Stafford said.

When Jim Hensley died, Cindy inherited his business and became the chairman of the board of Hensley. "Cindy came in, and of course I've had a thirty-three-year relationship with her, and she has never been a day-to-day operator—that's not what she is," Robert Delgado said. "I would contrast her more as an owner than an operator."

"The legacy of her father is very important to Cindy," Bayless said. "She wants her dad to be proud of her. She was so good to them when they were older; she was very, very attentive." In 1990, Jim and Smitty (whom Cindy has called "my best friends") moved across the street from the house at 7110 to be close to Cindy. It was her parents, not her husband, who noticed, in 1992, that she had become addicted to the prescription painkillers Percocet and Vicodin and was taking ten to fifteen pills a day.

"When the kids were young and I was alone with all these babies, by Thursday I'd have a pity party, and John would walk in, see me hanging off the ceiling," McCain told *Harper's Bazaar.* "Did I get angry? Sure, I'm only human." She has often referred to herself as a "single parent," except on weekends.

In his memoir "Faith of My Fathers," John McCain writes about the tradition of the absent father which he was born into as a third-generation Navy man, and which he continued as a politician:

> You are taught to consider their absence not as a deprivation, but as an honor. By your father's calling, you are born into an exclusive, noble tradition. Its standards require your father to dutifully serve a cause greater than his self-interest, and everyone around you, your mother, other relatives, and the whole Navy world, drafts you to the cause as well. Your father's life is marked by brave and uncomplaining sacrifice. You are asked only to bear the inconveniences caused by his absence with a little of the same stoic acceptance. When your father is away, the tradition remains, and embellishes a paternal image that is powerfully attractive to a small boy, even long after the boy becomes a man.

On the campaign trail in 2000, Cindy McCain remarked that "for most of the twenty years we've been married he's been in Washington all week while I'm in Arizona with the kids. I've never spent this much time with my husband."

Here is how Cindy McCain described learning to fly, when she appeared on the "Tonight Show" on April 30th, wearing a suit the color of daffodils, with a strand of turquoise beads around her neck: "I decided what I would do without telling him is that I would go to ground school and learn a little bit about it," she said. "I did that and then I wound up going to the flight school itself, and learning how to fly, getting my license, buying an airplane, without ever telling him." The audience was charmed by this tale of sneaky pluck, and particularly by its culmination, when—yet again—Cindy McCain surprised her husband with a revelation at the airport. This time, instead of presenting him with a baby, she took him on a flight.

Then she told another favorite story: she was twenty-four when she met John McCain at that cocktail party in Honolulu, but she told him that she was twenty-seven. McCain claimed to be thirty-seven; he was in fact forty-two. Cindy McCain giggled as she explained that they did not fess up until their marriage announcement was published in the local newspaper. "We started our marriage on a tissue of lies," she said with a smile, as the audience laughed.

McCain then went on to something more serious: the story of her addiction to painkillers, from 1989 through 1992, another secret that she kept from her husband. "He never knew," she told Jay Leno. "My parents came to me one day and said, 'You know, Cindy, there's something wrong with you' . . . and I said, 'You know, you're right, you're absolutely right,' and I put them down and I never touched another one again."

The stories that Cindy McCain tells all tend to have the same elements: secrecy, unilateral action, revelation. She is a kind of blond Lucille Ball in these tales, always up to something, never wanting to be found out by Ricky. But her madcap (if genteel) fifties-housewife sitcom persona is complicated by the more troublesome aspects of these anecdotes. She often leaves out a detail or two, omissions that change the shade of the story.

For example, on that first Hawaiian night when Cindy Hensley and her suitor were coy about their respective ages, John McCain was already married—to Carol McCain, a former swimsuit model, with whom he had a daughter, Sidney, and two adopted sons, Doug and Andrew. He had married Carol in 1965, two years before he was captured in North Vietnam. On Christmas Eve, 1969, Carol was seriously injured in a car accident while she was visiting her family in Philadelphia. She spent six months in the hospital, with a ruptured spleen, both legs crushed, a broken pelvis, and a broken arm. She did not send word of the accident to her husband, according to Timberg, because she felt that he was suffering enough, nor did she tell him what was going on when, in the course of the next two years, she underwent twenty-three operations. After all the surgeries, Carol McCain was four inches shorter than she had been before the accident.

In his memoir "Worth the Fighting For," John McCain said that when he started dating Cindy Hensley he "was separated from Carol, but our divorce would not become final until February of 1980." However, in his court petition for divorce, obtained by the Los Angeles *Times*, McCain stated that he and Carol had "cohabited as husband and wife" until January 7th of that year—nine months into his romance with Cindy Hensley. His divorce from Carol was finalized on April 2, 1980; he married Cindy five weeks later.

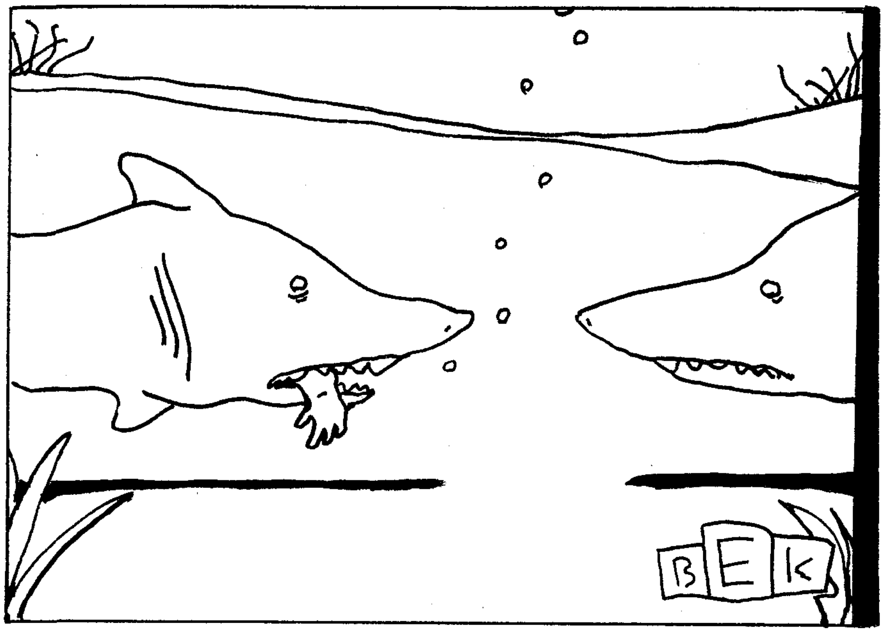
McCain has attributed the divorce to his own "selfishness and immaturity." Carol McCain told Robert Timberg that "the breakup of our marriage was not caused by my accident or Vietnam or any of those things. I don't know that it might not have happened if John had never been gone. I attribute it more to John turning forty and wanting to be twenty-five again than I do to anything else."

This pattern must have seemed unremarkable to Cindy Hensley, whose own father had left his first family in much the same way. Jim Hensley met Marguerite Smith at a military facility in West Virginia in 1945, after he was injured while flying a B-17 over Europe with the Army Air Forces. He was married to his high-school sweetheart, Mary Jeanne, and they had a daughter, Kathleen. Within months, Hensley had divorced Mary Jeanne and married Marguerite.

Cindy McCain regularly calls herself an only child. In fact, she has two half sisters: Kathleen Portalski and Dixie Burd, Marguerite's daughter from a previous marriage. "I feel bad about having a father that wasn't there, and then having my face rubbed in this—having her stand up and say she's an only child—makes it even worse," Kathleen Portalski told me. The video played before Cindy's speech at the Republican Convention declared that Cindy Lou Hensley "got all the attention of her father. . . . They were truly best friends."

Jim Hensley visited Kathleen on her birthday and on Christmas throughout her childhood, and took her shopping for school clothes. He escorted her down the aisle when she married Stanley Portalski, a wedding at which both Cindy and Marguerite were guests. He paid for the education of her son, Nicholas, and her daughter, Stephanie, who named one of her sons James Hensley, after her grandfather.

Kathleen Portalski visited her father almost every day in the months before his death. When he died, Cindy



"I'm trying to eat more locals."

McCain inherited the Hensley empire; Kathleen Portalski and her family received ten thousand dollars. Stephanie Portalski found that a credit card her grandfather had given her had been cut off days after his death. "It makes absolutely no sense," Kathleen Portalski said. "It makes me wonder what happened."

When I asked Portalski if she had ever contacted her half sister, to discuss the situation, she began to cry and spoke angrily: "You think she'd give a flying fuck?" Portalski said that she has not spoken to Cindy McCain since their father's funeral, at North Phoenix Baptist. Portalski sat in the front row as McCain gave a eulogy from the lectern, where she spoke of her father's generosity and kindness and referred to herself as his only child.

THE GATE OF HORN

Forgive me if I seem a bit at sea
but you woke me from a dream of words
I was setting to music I'll want you
to transcribe for me—a quatrain Shakespeare wrote
when he was eleven, "The uncertain glory
of an April day." At my age, what is life
but a *recitativo oscuro,* with its shadowy intimations,
musical aphorisms, librettos in a sigh.
Caught between willful tempestuousness
& bewildering geometries, we dread & long for
those moments of cruel lucidity that fix us as we are—Mallarmé's swan
frozen in ice . . .
Last night I sat here alone in the dark
listening to the overture of the coming storm—distant rumbling
like sheet metal rolling off a giant press, then the true
cacophony, a delirium of lightning bolts, thunderclaps,
whiff of ozone in charged air—as though nature's wunderkind—
"a lion flayed alive"—drove a lyric electric concert grand
hurtling over Niagara Falls. As my kinsman,
that half-caste past master of the hyper-climactic
molto grandioso crescendo, Beethoven,
reminds us, "The world is king," & we but paupers,
doing its bidding. Staring out the window in the rain
I could feel time passing like a wall of moving mirrors,
a river in which is reflected the wing of evening
speckled with stars, & thought, *Night sky, whose mind are you?*
The stars, the stars are inside our heads. & now
out of the silence the dead rising: ghosts of Buffalo soldiers
& Ogalala Sioux—winged messengers—like great blue herons
arrowing over the lake where the black spring lambs gambol,
late for the sacrifice . . .

John McCain stood in front of an audience of a hundred African-American men in a classroom at Arkansas Baptist College one spring afternoon. A poster on the wall behind them read "Arkansas Baptist College: It's a GOoD Thing!" "We started out this trip in Selma, Alabama," the Senator said. "I know you know Selma, Alabama, the place that will ever remain engraved in our memories as long as we cherish our Founding Fathers' belief that all of us were created equal—all of us!—and endowed with certain inalienable rights. We stood by the bridge, the famous bridge, that you are very well aware of, where Dr. King and others marched."

A few minutes later, a young man asked why, in 1983, McCain had voted against making Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s birthday a national holiday. McCain said that he had been wrong and had come to realize that he had made a mistake. Another asked what the Senator thought was the most pressing issue facing African-Americans. "First of all, assuring equal rights for every single American," he replied. "As Dr. King said, a person is judged not for the color of their skin but the content of their character. I believe that's an exact quote. The second thing I think is what's being done here. We've got to give people the education and training they need to compete and go as far as their ambitions will take them. . . . The third thing, if I may say so, is the encouragement of the family." He emphasized the importance of having "at least a two-parent situation, and so we have to do whatever we can to foster and encourage the family."

There was something almost comic about an older white man who had moved on from his first family lecturing a group of young black men about family values, but McCain did not appear awkward or uneasy until Mike Huckabee joined him at the microphone and put a finer point on the negative aspects of single parenthood.

"The fact is that if a child grows up without the benefit of both the mother and the father there is a seven hundred per cent greater likelihood that child will spend a good portion of his life in poverty," Huckabee said. "It becomes an accelerated problem, which the Senator, I believe, understands, and I think he understands it better than anybody else running for President. Because you can't separate the breakdown of a family and the breakdown of an economy and ultimately the breakdown of individual lives and what it does in terms of the long-term cycle. So it really does get to the heart of what we're doing by emphasizing, as he has said, strong families help create strong community, and that's the basis for a strong economy and everybody has a chance to succeed."

Cindy McCain, who was wearing a forest-green pants suit with a diamond Marine Corps pin in her lapel, was sitting near the lectern with Carly Fiorina, the former Hewlett-Packard C.E.O. who is the Republican National Committee Victory Chairman; the former congressman Asa Hutchinson; and Fitzgerald Hill, the president of Arkan-

After the storm,
I followed the tone rows & tentative *tap tap tap*
of drainpipe off metal roof—a blind man's cane, wandering
Oedipus—sensations uprooted to atmospheric effects,
the many weathers of this moment, this place—
its windy gusts, fleeting moods, scherzo of cloud shadow
racing over rockface—& wondered, at the risk of forgetfulness,
where do we go, venturing forth beyond our murky
origins? Recapture against failing light
memories of a rusted harrow leaning upon
a dusky barn door, a swaybacked horse the color of "bricks
wrapped in silk," thunder of boots on a hardwood floor,
& smell once more that starched white linen apron
we buried our eyes in. I hate farewells, don't you?
& the terror of coming back to what is at once new
& familiar, a reunion of two times chimed exactly
that leaves us estranged from ourselves, staring at shadows
trembling in the shade. What will save us? Who appear
at the head of our bed announcing, "Cast off your shackles
& chains!" & place in our hands the sacred instruments,
show us the great tablets scriven in the sky,
prophesying, "These are road signs to Heaven
& gateways to the Pearly Everlasting!" & looking up
we shall see on high the letters & the numbers, the figures
of the creatures of the Lord, all carved in the frozen music
of stone—the Lion lying down with the Lamb, the Oriole
serenading the lowly Mule at dawn, the Dove fanning
the Night Nurse's brow, the three Angels washing the feet
of the weary Day Laborer, & His Son come down in a cloud at last
to lift the veil . . .
Do raise the shade—& fill that glass.
Ah, whiskey is a great river . . . Is that a sunspot or a swan? . . .
What do I miss most at my age? . . .
Seeing the stars.

—*L. S. Asekoff*

sas Baptist College. She whispered something to her husband, who then asked a man in the audience if he would share his story. The man, Brian Miller, spoke of being abandoned in a hotel room by his mother, a drug addict, when he was an infant and growing up with his alcoholic father in Sacramento, surrounded by violence, crime, and drugs. He joined the Crips and was arrested three times before he was sixteen. Since then, he had turned his life around and was currently working at the college as the director of student life.

After the event, Cindy McCain approached Miller. "I hope I didn't put you on the spot," she said. "Dr. Hill told me a little about you, and I was just so moved by what you've been through."

Cindy's profile on the McCain campaign Web site begins with the sentence "Cindy Hensley McCain has dedicated her life to improving the lives of those less fortunate both in the United States and around the world." Charity work, as she put it in a video posted on her daughter Meghan's campaign blog, "is inspirational to me and it does absolutely invigorate me and keep me going." The two to three weeks a year that she spends on her missions are, she says, her best times: "I think I'm happiest when I'm out in the field working and being a part of what I can do to make the world a better place."

The campaign has attempted to portray McCain's past addiction to prescription painkillers and her public statements about it as a Betty Ford-style story of altruism and accountability. "It is a problem that is a national problem," McCain has said. "Particularly with women. And so I try to talk about it as much as possible, because I don't want anyone to ever wind up in the shoes I did at the time." But Cindy McCain's openness about that period has not been entirely voluntary, and hers was not the only life damaged by her addiction.

From 1988 to 1995, McCain ran and funded her own charity, the American Voluntary Medical Team, delivering supplies and assistance to countries in crisis. In 1991, she hired a young man from Nebraska named Tom Gosinski, the former manager of government and international affairs for America West Airlines, to be a director of A.V.M.T. He became a close friend of the McCain family, and gave swimming lessons to Cindy's sons.

In the summer of 1992, Gosinski began to notice that his boss was behaving erratically. He kept a journal, which was later obtained by two reporters, Amy Silverman and Jeremy Voas, and published, in 1994, by the local alternative weekly paper, the Phoenix *New Times*. On July 20, 1992, Gosinski wrote:

> I do not know what Cindy is up to but it appears as though she is trying to use several doctors' DEA #'s so that she can acquire drugs for personal use. . . . I certainly hope that Cindy does not get herself or AVMT in trouble.

The journal entries grow increasingly fretful throughout the summer. In late August, Gosinski wrote about an upcoming mission to Africa:

> August 28, 1992: Mark Salter in John McCain's Washington office has stated that the State Department and the Department of Defense believe it is not safe to travel to Somalia or the northern regions of Kenya. Cindy insists that we are going to go on the trip and that it may be wise for us to pack guns.
>
> She is absolutely crazy—I don't know how to load a gun let alone shoot one.

About a month later, the situation came to a head:

> October 2, 1992: Well, it is done. Last night Jim and Smitty confronted Cindy regarding her dependency to prescription drugs and she admitted to her addiction.

In December, Gosinski discovered a prescription for painkillers that had been made out in his name by the charity's doctor, John M. Johnson. Cindy McCain had filled it at her neighborhood pharmacy. Gosinski was fired in mid-January, and soon afterward met with the Drug Enforcement Administration to discuss his former boss's behavior.

A year later, Gosinski filed a wrongful-termination lawsuit. The McCains retaliated by enlisting John Dowd, a Washington lawyer who had helped extricate them from an earlier scandal, when McCain was one of five senators accused of interfering with the 1989 federal investigation of Charles Keating, Jr., the disgraced chairman of the failed Lincoln Savings & Loan Association. McCain had accepted more than a hundred thousand dollars in contributions from Keating, a family friend. Keating had a vacation home in the Bahamas, and the McCains had flown there with him several times. Cindy claimed to have misplaced receipts that supposedly showed that the McCains had reimbursed Keating for these trips. (With her father, Cindy had also invested three hundred and fifty-nine thousand dollars in a shopping mall that Keating was constructing. When a writer for the *Arizona Republic* first called McCain to ask about his wife's business ties to Keating, McCain called the reporter a "liar" and an "idiot.") McCain was eventually exonerated, but he called his involvement with Keating "the worst mistake of my life."

Cindy McCain wrote in a column for *Newsweek* in 2001 that during the Keating Five investigation "the painkillers cushioned me. The newspaper articles didn't hurt as much, and I didn't hurt as much. I can remember sitting in the Senate hearings, listening to Howell Heflin saying terrible things not just about my husband but about me. The pills made me feel euphoric and free."

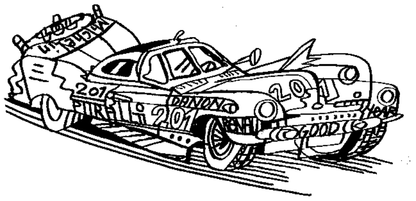
By the late summer of 1994, the *New Times* and the *Arizona Republic* were on the verge of exposing Cindy McCain's addiction and her misconduct at A.V.M.T. When the McCains learned that the story was about to come out, they called a press conference. Cindy admitted stealing drugs from A.V.M.T., and claimed to have completed a federal diversion program. She made no mention of Gosinski or of implicating her employees in illegal activity. John M. Johnson lost his state medical license. Tom Gosinski let his wrongful-termination suit expire and went back to work for America West.

Betsey Bayless recalls seeing McCain at a Republican women's luncheon the day the story broke. "I remember walking up to her and giving her a hug and feeling so bad for her," she said. "I don't condone abusing drugs in any way, but she had a problem and she had dealt with the problem and that was over, and then it's all over the media."

This marked the beginning of Cindy McCain's sour relationship with the press. In contrast to her garrulous husband, she avoids members of the press on the campaign trail as though they had a pox. In the time that I spent with the McCains, Cindy never looked me in the eye, even when she was speaking to me. Unlike Michelle Obama, Cindy McCain has had no public schedule of events that the press is invited to cover. Requests for access are frequently met with evasion.

In April, at a barbecue for the travelling press that the McCains hosted at their ranch in Cottonwood, guests said McCain kept herself apart from the group while her husband indulged in his usual japery with the "jerks," as he affectionately calls reporters. If the group was on the lawn, Cindy moved to the porch. If the porch was invaded, she drifted elsewhere. She was like a bird that stays within view but takes flight if you come too close.

The goals of the press are irreconcilable with Cindy McCain's craving for privacy, secrecy, discretion. A member of the McCain staff told me that Cindy was "scared shitless" of harming her husband's campaign. After Michelle Obama's endlessly replayed comment about being really proud of her country for the first time in her adult life, Cindy McCain told a crowd at a campaign stop, "I don't know about you, if you heard those words earlier, I am very proud of my country." A few weeks later, McCain talked about that remark to Jill Zuckman, of the Chicago *Tribune:* "It just spilled out of my mouth. And then I got back on the bus and I thought, Oh, my God, what have I done? I thought, Oh, I should never have opened my mouth. How did that happen? I'll put duct tape over it." When Sarah Palin, the governor of Alaska, joined the campaign, Cindy became markedly perkier: suddenly there was another woman around to deflect attention from her.



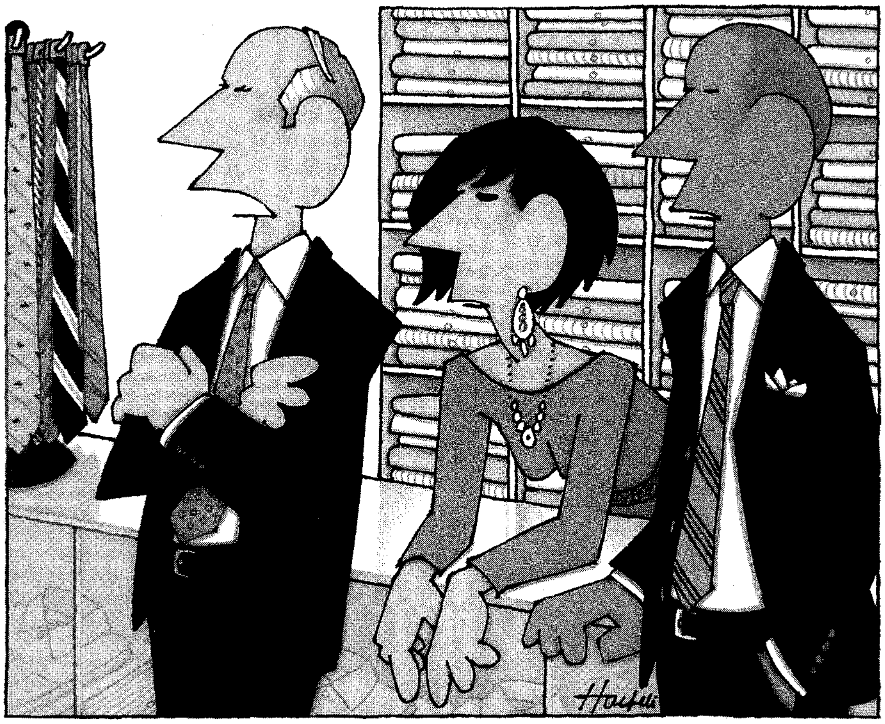
McCain zigzags constantly between the two roles she was brought up with: she is the brave, individualistic Westerner who can ride the range and fly a plane and then the polite, fragile lady of the house with the flawless outfits and the duct-taped mouth. These are very different roles, but they both require privacy. Being a campaign spouse—or the First Lady—is an exceedingly public role. It is little wonder, then, that when she is on the campaign trail Cindy McCain often looks miserable.

John McCain seems to gravitate toward women who endure pain in silence. Like Carol McCain, Cindy McCain has struggled through the worst times of her life without her husband. In 2004, at the age of forty-nine, she had a stroke, after which she retreated to one of her condominiums in Coronado, California, for four months to recuperate, alone. McCain first became addicted to painkillers after spinal surgery for a ruptured disk. She has said of her husband that she "didn't want him to come home to this woman who couldn't do anything. I completely masked it and completely kept myself somewhat painfree and [with] the ability to function and do everything he wanted." McCain did not reveal her drug abuse to her husband until 1993, when she was being investigated by the D.E.A. and there was no way to prevent his finding out. Even then, she couldn't bring herself to tell him face to face: John McCain learned of his wife's addiction when she called him from her lawyer's office. "It was hard for him to admit he didn't know," Cindy McCain told *Harper's Bazaar*, "even though I explained, 'It was my job not to let you know.' " This is women's work, as the McCains have defined it: to keep their own suffering quiet.

"My father admired my grandfather above all others," John McCain wrote on the very first page of his memoir "Faith of My Fathers." "My mother, to whom he was devoted, had once asked him if he loved his father more than he loved her. He replied simply, 'Yes, I do.' "

Until recently, the McCain campaign was a distinctly masculine environment. Steve Schmidt—whom McCain promoted to campaign manager in July—is a tough-talking Karl Rove protégé with a shaved head who is nicknamed the Bullet. Mark Salter, a longtime aide and the co-author of McCain's books, is a chain-smoker who sports the classic manly accessories—aviator sunglasses and a mustache. Even McCain's most soft-spoken adviser, Charlie Black, has an intimidating air of country-club paternalism. This is McCain's understanding of the way it should be: men are your fellow-soldiers, the ones you really depend on.

It was therefore a great surprise when McCain announced that he had chosen a woman as his running mate. But the choice of Sarah Palin, specifically, was telling. As Cindy put it in her speech at the Convention, "John has picked a reform-minded, hockey-mommin', basketball-shootin', moose-huntin', fly-fishin', pistol-packing mother of five for Vice-President." Unlike Hillary Clinton, to whom Palin referred in her first public appearance with McCain, and whose supporters the McCain campaign is courting, Palin has thin credentials as a national leader. McCain's selection of a woman with less than two years' experience running a state with a population a quarter the size of Brooklyn suggests that his decision was based in large part on Palin's symbolic value rather than on substance.



"It's gotten so customers won't take my advice unless they think I'm gay."

• •

Entrées in the form of Popsicles were popular at the Iowa State Fair, in late August. There were pork chops on sticks, corn dogs, skewered smoked-beef bits, and barbecued chicken. Men in ten-gallon hats and women wearing cowboy boots roamed the vast livestock tents, and a farmer proudly showed off Freight Train, his prize-winning twelve-hundred-and-fifty-nine-pound pig.

Cindy had no speaking role that day, but the day before she had introduced her husband in Lima, Ohio, with a speech about service and suffering. "I just recently returned from the country of Rwanda, in Africa," she said. "I observed something that to this day, that all of my life, I will take with me, and it was a woman that had survived the genocide. She had survived unspeakable atrocities, and had decided that what was best for her, what was best for what was left of her family—which wasn't much—was to overcome and put her country first." (The woman was brought to the Convention, and she stood and waved to the crowd.) "What it did was remind me point-blank of something about my husband. And, truly, what this was all about was putting your country first." It was confusing, but the audience applauded wildly.

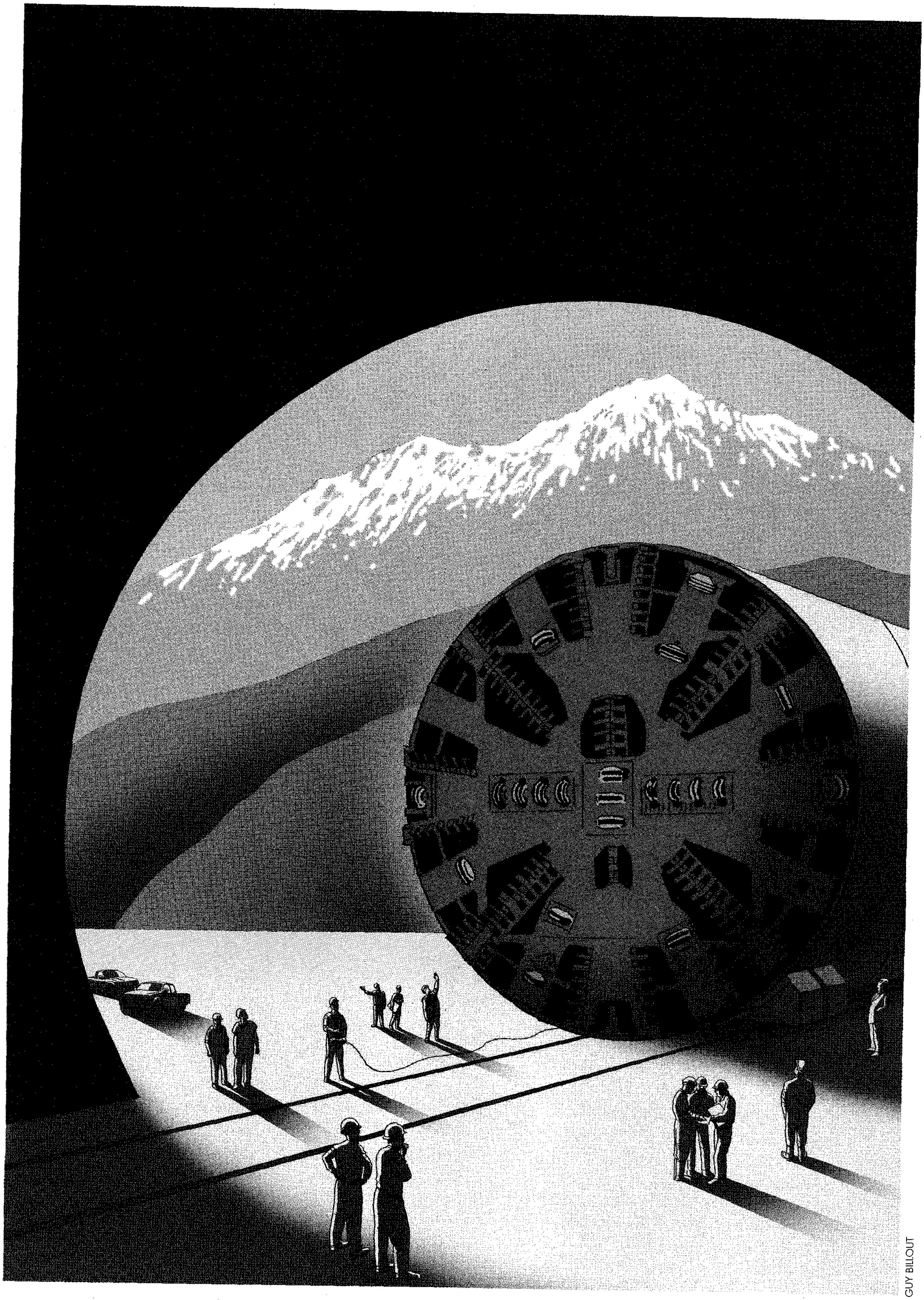
At the fair in Des Moines, people had waited in the heat for several hours behind a barricade of straw bales for John McCain to materialize. "Here's a lady you may recognize," McCain said. "My wife, Cindy!" Everyone clapped, and someone called out, "Hello, First Lady!"

"She keeps John on his toes," said Wayne Jackson, a Vietnam veteran in a wheelchair, who was wearing a Navy baseball cap with a John McCain button pinned to the front. "When she was over with Mother Teresa, she brought a baby home from India!" Jackson had heard McCain speak six or seven times and said that he feared Barack Obama. "He's not African-American—he's Arab-American."

"My opponent doesn't want nuclear power, he doesn't want us to drill offshore, and the other day he mentioned that what we need to do is inflate our tires," McCain said, his voice ringing out over the P.A. system. "That's a public-service announcement, not an energy policy!" Applause and catcalls rippled through the crowd. "So we're havin' fun in this campaign, my friends, and I want you to have fun, too," he continued. "I want you to enjoy this campaign."

Cindy McCain stood by her husband's side, her eyes rendered invisible by sunglasses, her mouth a lipsticked slash across her face—a straight line, unsmiling. A woman in the audience, wearing tight chinos, T-shirt, tube socks, and tennis shoes, motioned toward the candidate's wife with her chin and whispered to the man beside her, "She doesn't look like she's having any fun at all." ♦

NEWYORKER.COM
An audio interview with Ariel Levy.



GUY BILLOUT

THE LONG DIG

Getting through the Swiss Alps the hard way.

BY BURKHARD BILGER

The people of Allmannsweier, Germany, have never really grown used to the giant mechanical worms outside their village. You might say that the worms crept up on them. When the worms first appeared, almost thirty years ago, they were just little machines, a few yards long, built by a local engineer named Martin Herrenknecht. Now they're among the largest land vehicles on earth. Their hangars loom above the tobacco fields south of Allmannsweier like vast white cocoons. "If we had known how much room they would need, we might not have let them come," the owner of the town's upholstery shop told me. (He happened to be Herrenknecht's older brother.) "But they are here. What can we do?"

Allmannsweier lies along the southern Rhine, in the rich bottomland between the Black Forest and the Vosges Mountains. It was founded more than a thousand years ago, by a tribe of Germanic farmers called the Allemanni, and could still pass for a medieval village. Its half-timbered houses are huddled around an onion-domed church, their haylofts now suspended over BMWs. The only other hint that the local economy has changed—that the town is full of engineers—is a tidiness that verges on the obsessive, even by the standards of southern Germany. Every window seems to have a flower box, every traffic circle its freshly painted lines and sans-serif signs. The streams are flanked by neat rows of beeches and poplars, their branches dotted with crows. The birds were protected after the Second World War, one villager told me: "Now we have to shoot them. There are too many."

Over the years, the locals have developed an uneasy, symbiotic relationship with their primary employer. Herrenknecht AG is now the largest maker of tunnelling machines in the world. Its taxes alone have made Allmannsweier wealthy, and about a quarter of the town's seven hundred adults work at the factory. Many of the top engineers grew up in the area, and new local talent is continually fostered by internships, apprenticeships, and a high-school vocational course paid for by the company.

On sunny spring mornings, kindergarten classes sometimes take field trips to the factory, to see the worms and draw them with colored pencils. The machines are assembled under arched steel cranes and in cavernous halls that smell of carbide and ionized air. Their cylindrical sides are painted grub white—the better to glow in the darkness of a tunnel beneath a mountain—and their cutting heads are bright primary colors. The smallest machines, used to dig tunnels for utility lines or water pipes, are as little as four inches in diameter. The largest, used to dig subway, train, and highway tunnels, are almost a third of a mile long and fifty feet wide. They contain some ninety thousand moving parts and weigh more than nine million pounds. Were all the kindergartners in a class to stand on one another's shoulders, like acrobats in a Chinese circus, they wouldn't reach the top.

"It is a nice toy," Herrenknecht told me one afternoon, standing under a twenty-three-million-dollar unit bound for Caracas. "If you want to buy it for Christmas, I give you five per cent off." He patted the worm's steel flanks and grinned up at its blunt teeth. He looked tiny beside it—like one of the short-tempered dwarfs in "The Hobbit," gazing up at Smaug the dragon. He had a barrel chest and hairy forearms, fierce blue eyes, and an owlish head, tufted with gray and white. He stood with his legs spread wide, his hands clenched at his sides, and communicated mostly in nods and shrugs. When he did speak, it was in an oddly clipped English—he'd spent most of his time in *Oberschule* "shooting the teacher lady with nails," he said—the explosive sound of which he seemed to enjoy. "You must fight to get the stone out of the tunnel. You must fight!"

Herrenknecht, who is sixty-six, believes that few places can't be improved by a good-sized hole. To see a map of his company's projects is to envision the planet as a porous thing—a cosmic loofah—inhabited by an increasingly hivelike humanity. At any given moment, close to a thousand Herrenknecht worms are burrowing under mountains, rivers, and cities on almost every continent. They have tunnelled along the San Andreas Fault, under the Yangtze River and beside the Bosporus, through catacombs in Rome and petrified pilings in Cairo. "We are changing the world," Herrenknecht told me. "We are putting it in tunnels. That is my vision."

Engineers build cities; the rest of us just live in them. According to population figures from the United Nations, this year marks a turning point in human history: for the first time, more people live in urban areas than in rural ones, and the disproportion grows every year. Whether we walk to work or ride a bicycle, commute along river bluffs or via concrete tunnels, our movements are increasingly dictated from afar—spatial equations solved by technicians we don't know, hunched over the planet like eager boys above a model-railroad set.

"The process of urbanization now seems unstoppable," Herrenknecht declared last year, with obvious relish, in a company newsletter. There are already more than three hundred cities around the world with more than a million inhabitants, "and the number of such megacities is increasing rapidly." If developed countries are to avoid gridlock,

The Gotthard Base Tunnel will be the longest traffic tunnel in the world; it is also one of the most geologically challenging.

the newsletter went on to suggest, their cities have to grow down as well as up. Every skyscraper needs a corresponding subway tunnel, every country a high-speed rail system to connect its urban centers. "This frontier can only be conquered by bold, innovative and confident engineers, companies, planners, investors, politicians and governments," Herrenknecht concluded. "Together we are building the future."

That a villager from Allmannsweier should help shape the world's megacities is partly an accident of birth order. Herrenknecht's mother was a seamstress, his father an upholsterer. They both came from large farming families—there were twelve siblings on his father's side, thirteen on his mother's—and were married just as the Second World War began. Two of Herrenknecht's uncles died in Stalingrad; a third survived by boiling birch bark for soup. After the war, his parents were often so poor that they had to barter tobacco for food, or scavenge for grain in cut-over fields. They could afford to have only two children, and Martin was the second. "It is in the Black Forest always the same," he told me. "The older brother takes care of the father's business. There is no discussion."

His brother, Dieter, remembers things a little differently. "School cost money, and there wasn't enough for both of us," he told me one afternoon, in the upholstery shop. "There was only enough for one." Dieter is a taller, graver version of his little brother. He showed me his parents' ledgers from the forties, written in a spidery hand. The Herrenknechts spent twelve to fourteen hours a day in the shop, slowly turning it into a prosperous business, and expected a similar work ethic of their sons. (Their father used to tell them that when he was growing up his family had only five pairs of wooden shoes for twelve children; those who woke up last went barefoot.) Martin worked in the shop from the age of six, but he was too impatient for handiwork—he was given to occasional fits of rage with a hammer, I was told—and too ambitious. "I wanted to be an engineer, a mechanical engineer," he said. "That was my dream, since I was four. To build something, create something. To push."

Herrenknecht had a good head for numbers—"In calculating, he was *Spitze*," Dieter told me. After earning an engineering degree from the University of Konstanz, he took jobs in Switzerland, Canada, and Mannheim, Germany, designing road-construction machinery and managing work sites. Then, in 1971, he was hired to help direct a tunnelling project in the central Alps, beneath Switzerland's Seelisberg.

Tunnelling is less a profession than a calling, Herrenknecht says. "To do it only fifty per cent? No chance." After six months, most workers either flee for other jobs or stay underground the rest of their lives—transfixed by the scale and complexity of the work, the sheer hubris of punching a hole through a mountain. The machines are so large that they have to be disassembled before shipment, loaded onto flatbed trucks, then transferred to river barges or ocean freighters. In China, where Herrenknecht is now excavating subways in seven cities, new roads have had to be laid, bridges erected, and canals dredged merely to get the machines to the work sites.

For five years, Herrenknecht spent almost every waking hour beneath the Seelisberg, descending before dawn and reëmerging after nightfall. His tunnelling machine, nicknamed Big John, was a balky thing that at first could barely manage a metre a day. The air was close, hot, and clotted with dust, the noise unrelenting. "It was fantastic," he remembers. "You had to go through hell to survive. But without this tough working I wouldn't have the company today."

When the project was over, Herrenknecht went home. He borrowed twenty thousand dollars from his mother, rented a three-room apartment in the nearby city of Lahr, and hired a pair of engineers to help him build a small machine of his own design. The leading tunnelling companies of the time—Wirth, in Germany; Lovat, in Canada; Memco and Robbins, both in the United States; and Mitsubishi, in Japan—specialized in machines for either hard or soft soils. Herrenknecht wanted his to be omnivorous. During the next thirty years, he built "mixshield" machines that could chew through granite or sand, under eight thousand feet of compressed soil or twelve atmospheres of ocean water. He built micro-tunnelling machines that could slip under city streets steered by remote control. The more difficult the conditions, the more they enticed him. As Werner Suhm, the head of the company's utility-tunnelling division, put it, "There is no ground on this nice planet that Herrenknecht cannot cut."

The defining project of Herrenknecht's career—and one of the greatest public works of any kind—is the Gotthard Base Tunnel, not far from the Seelisberg. The tunnel, which has been under construction since 2002, will run from the village of Erstfeld, in central Switzerland, to Bodio, in the southeast, a distance of more than thirty-five miles. When completed, in 2017, it will be the longest traffic tunnel in the world; it is also one of the most geologically challenging. Its closest rivals are Japan's Seikan Tunnel, which opened in 1988, and the English Channel Tunnel, or Chunnel, which opened in 1994. The Seikan Tunnel is thirty-three miles long and crosses a rocky seabed between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. The Chunnel is thirty-one miles long and passes through a layer of chalk as soft as an Oreo's filling. The Gotthard crosses nine geological zones, none of them fully understood. It cuts through granite and quartz, along fault lines and beneath a sugarlike layer of dolomitic marble—a sand trap to anything going through it. Compared with the Gotthard project, Herrenknecht believes, the Chunnel was child's play.

The Gotthard Massif is one of the Continent's great divides. It separates north from south, German from Italian, the African tectonic plate from the European. Four major rivers and four mountain ranges meet there, in a series of peaks that rise to more than ten thousand feet. It is the only Alpine range, Goethe wrote, "that deserves to be called royal." To one side, the Rhine flows north to Rotterdam; to the other, the Rhone flows south to Arles. Even the weather seems to part ways at this point: to cross the Gotthard is almost always to pass from sunshine into rain, or vice versa.

For the Swiss, the Gotthard has been both a gateway to Europe and a bulwark against it. Lacking a common language or religion, they've fixed their identity on geography, with the Gotthard as its central axis. "If you look at the Alps, there is only one spot in the whole half circle where you can cross in one step," the Swiss historian and journalist Helmut Stalder, the author of "Mythos Gotthard," told me. "In every other part, in Italy or France, you have to cross two mountain chains." It was here, around 1230, that the vertiginous Devil's Bridge was flung across the Schöllenen Gorge, opening the first trade route to Lombardy. And it was here, in 1291, that farmers in three valleys banded together against the Hapsburgs, giving rise to the Swiss Confederacy and the legend of William Tell. "The Gotthard is like a collective reference point for Swiss history," Stalder said. "It is something very deep in the soul of this nation."

The Gotthard Pass rises to just under seven thousand feet, meandering between bare peaks and over scree-covered slopes. In the fifteen-hundreds, a mule train could reportedly cross it in a week. Once the path was widened, in the eighteen-thirties, a horse-drawn carriage could make the trip in less than two days. By then, though, Switzerland needed more than carriages to keep pace with modern Europe. While Germany and France had grown into industrial powers, the Swiss were still mostly farmers and craftsmen. Their cities were landlocked and girdled with mountains—walled off from the factories and steelworks of Dortmund and the Ruhr Valley. They had little coal or iron of their own, and the railroads had largely passed them by. If they wanted to be more than a "deserted island," the Swiss railroad magnate Alfred Escher declared, they had no choice but to dig a railroad tunnel at the Gotthard Pass—a modern equivalent of the Devil's Bridge.

"Is this the story you want to tell on your college application?"

Tunnelling was still a clumsy, haphazard art. For almost two thousand years, nothing in Europe had equalled the mile-long passage that the Romans dug from Naples to Pozzuoli, heating the volcanic rock with bonfires and dousing it with cold water to crack it. Then, in 1825, the engineer Marc Brunel began digging a tunnel beneath the Thames, in London. Brunel was inspired by a worm that he'd seen boring through ship's timbers on the Chatham docks. It ingested the wood as it went, excreting a shell-like substance that lined the tunnel walls behind it. Brunel's version of this—adapted by engineers ever since—was a giant tunnelling machine. The front was a cast-iron frame honeycombed into thirty-six cells. Each cell had room for one miner and was faced with wooden boards. The miners would remove one board at a time, dig six inches with a pick or a shovel, and replace the board. When they were done, the frame was shoved forward with jacks, and the exposed walls were reinforced with concrete.

"It was a horrible job," Robert Hulse, the director of the Brunel Museum, in London, told me. The Thames was one of the filthiest rivers in the world, laced with industrial waste and raw sewage, and the tunnel lay less than twenty feet below its bed. It was subject to continual leaks and floods, and suffused with fetid marsh gases that would periodically combust, ignited by the gas lamps that lit the tunnel. "Imagine working in this vile hole, showered in sewage, with jets of flame coming out," Hulse says. "The gases would burn for days on end sometimes, and the frame would get so hot that if you touched it you would be burned." Near the end, the miners had to work in two-hour shifts—not because their employers took pity on them but because their brains could no longer function on so little oxygen. Even so, Hulse says, some were carried out senseless or straitjacketed and raving.

The Thames tunnel was a disaster by almost any measure. It took eighteen years to build—six times longer than originally planned—and never made back its investment. (When foot traffic waned, at a penny toll per crossing, the owners brought in minstrels, magicians, and sword swallowers, to no avail.) Still, the tunnel was a wonder of its time—"To walk under the Thames in 1843 was like walking on the moon," Hulse says—and it inspired similar schemes on the Continent. In 1870, miners finished digging a nearly eight-mile-long tunnel through Mont Cenis, connecting the French and the Italian Alps. Two years later, in Switzerland, an engineer named Louis Favre took up Alfred Escher's challenge and agreed to build a railroad tunnel across the Gotthard Pass. The digging would take eight years, Favre promised. For every day that he raced ahead of schedule, he would get a five-thousand-franc bonus; for every day that he fell behind, he would pay five thousand francs—and the fines would double after six months.

Conditions at Gotthard were even tougher than under the Thames. To cross the massif, the railroad had to climb more than two thousand feet, through a series of tight, helical tunnels, then cut straight through the mountain for more than nine miles and descend through more helical tunnels on the other side. The tunnel was often knee-deep in water

JUST MARRIED
KOREN

"You know, I never properly vetted you."

from hidden springs and fissures, and filthy with dung from draft horses. Temperatures hovered around eighty-six degrees—perfect for incubating bacteria. The miners' technique was simple: they hammered holes in the rock with pneumatic drills, then stuffed them with sticks of dynamite. But accidents were common (dynamite had been patented only five years earlier), and the compressed air for the drills would have been better used to ventilate the tunnels. In the end, some two hundred men died of disease, cave-ins, and other mishaps, and more than four hundred and fifty were seriously injured. Most were poor Italians, who crowded into the Swiss villages in such numbers that some had to sleep in cow stalls. They eventually organized a strike, and at a protest rally some of them threw rocks, prompting the local militia to open fire, killing four.

The work went on. Starting at opposite ends of the pass, two tunnelling teams burrowed toward each other through the mountain. On February 28, 1880, at six-thirty in the evening, a miner on the southern side struck the rock with his drill and blasted through. The miners on the other side were baffled at first, then began to dance and shout. Some tried to grab the drill bit in celebration, but it was still so hot that it burned their hands.

The breakthrough was miraculously precise—the two tunnels were offset by only a foot—but the tunnel wasn't completed for another year and a half. Favre, in any case, wasn't around to rack up more fines. Seven months before the breakthrough, he'd collapsed from a stroke while inspecting the tunnel. Perhaps because he had died among them, the miners set aside their grievances for a moment and granted him the honor of first passage. Before shaking hands across the breach, they took a picture of the engineer and passed it, hand to hand, down the length of the tunnel.

The Gotthard tunnel was the Swiss Suez Canal, Helmut Stalder says: "Before it, Switzerland was a dead end; then, from one day to another, it was the heart of the Continent." The railroad brought in technology and raw materials. It took isolated villages, each running on its own church clock, and put them all on the same timetable. And though it was largely the work of foreigners—the helical tunnels, for instance, were designed by a German named Robert Gerwig—its success helped give rise to the legend of Swiss precision and engineering. "Behind it, there came whole industries—constructing locomotives and wagons and huge diesel motors," Stalder says. "It was a fundamental change of identity. In Europe, we say, the railway was the plow of modernity. It went through the agricultural landscape and brought modernity behind it."

Not everyone welcomed the change. The railroad was "a work of the Devil," one conservative politician from Lucerne declared. It was puncturing Switzerland's defenses, exposing it to bad influences. Decades earlier, Schopenhauer had cautioned that "the Alps and their dwarflike inhabitants were a natural shield against the hordes of Germanic lummoxes, beer bellies, and professors." The new tunnel seemed to confirm his fears. "The newspapers were all saying, 'What are we opening ourselves up to?' " Judith Schueler, a Dutch historian who has written a book on the Gotthard called "Materializing Identity," told me. " 'What will modernity bring?' "

The answer was a new kind of nation: neutral yet militant, cosmopolitan yet isolationist—a crossroads, heavily fortified. By the Second World War, the Gotthard Pass had become so strategically important that the Swiss concentrated their troops in the mountains around it, leaving the cities sparsely defended. "How do you tell people that the Army leaves them behind to go defend some goats?" Stalder says. "You say, 'In the Middle Ages, they protected the Gotthard, and we have to do it now.' It's a collective memory that also helps to form a nation."

Crossing the Alps has since become even more essential to European trade. Nearly four hundred miles of tunnels wind through Switzerland, and their capacity still can't meet the need. As the European Union has opened borders, the freight traffic on roads has doubled every eight years, and increased more than tenfold since 1980. A potato grown in Poland may be sliced into fries in Italy and eaten in Belgium, crisscrossing Switzerland along the way. A million and a half trucks now traverse the Swiss Alps every year—freight traffic has largely shifted from rail to road—many with flammable loads, and traffic jams at the major tunnels can stretch for miles.

Nine years ago, on the morning of March 24, 1999, a Belgian driver named Gilbert Degrave was halfway through the Mont Blanc tunnel when he noticed smoke leaking from the back of his truck. Degrave was carrying twelve tons of flour and nine tons of margarine. The two substances had somehow caught fire during the drive—perhaps from a discarded cigarette—and by the time Degrave stopped, the truck was burning uncontrollably. Before firefighters could reach the blaze, the flames had spread to other cars and trucks, igniting their tires and fuel tanks. The tunnel acted as a giant chimney: cool air rushed in one end and out the other at a steep gradient, fanning the fire. Some passengers stayed in their cars and rolled up their windows. Others fled for the exit on foot and were overcome by toxic fumes: rather than pump the smoke out, the tunnel's ventilation system drew air in. The fire went on to burn for two days and reach temperatures of eighteen hundred degrees. By the time the tunnel was cool enough to reënter, thirty-nine people had died. "The sights in the tunnel are unimaginable," one French firefighter said. "There are heavy trucks which have melted into the tunnel floor until they are no higher than a car. Many of the bodies have been incinerated. All that remains are a few blackened bones."

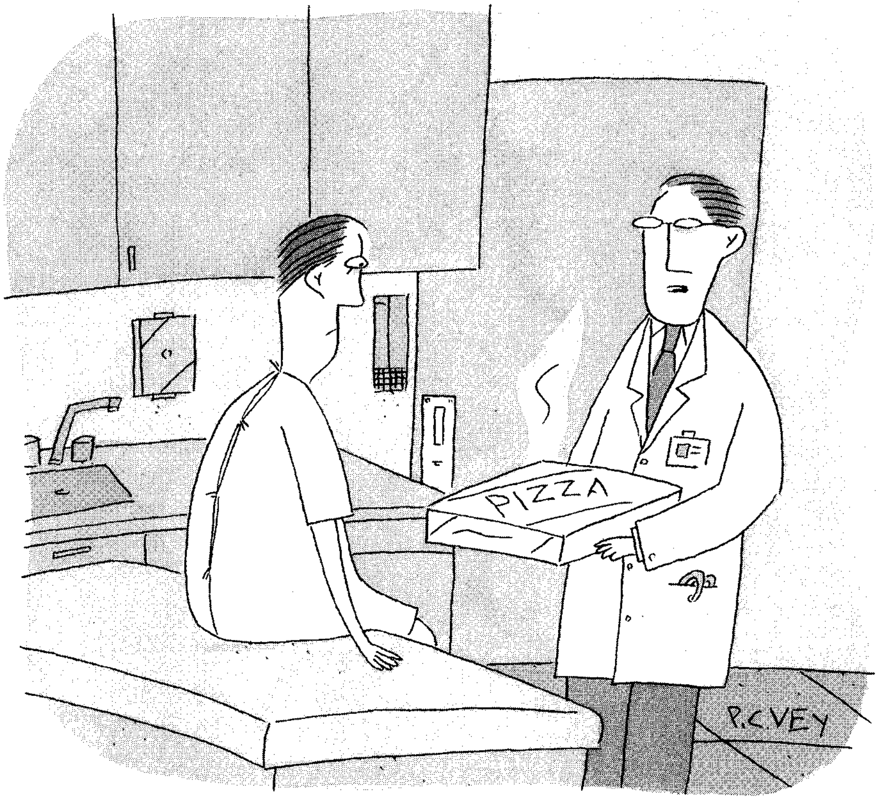
The Mont Blanc fire was the worst of its kind in Alpine history, but not for long. The following year, a funicular caught fire while passing through a tunnel on the way to Austria's Kitzsteinhorn glacier, killing a hundred and fifty-five people. The year after that, two trucks collided in the Gotthard Road Tunnel, which opened in 1980 and runs roughly parallel to the railway tunnel. The crash ignited a blaze so intense that an eight-hundred-foot stretch of the tunnel's ceiling collapsed, killing eleven. As the damaged tunnels were closed for repairs, their traffic was diverted to other routes, which were already congested. The best alternative was to shift some of the burden back to trains: that would both cut the cost of transport and dramatically reduce the risk of accidents. But the old mountain railroads were too slow and steep for heavy freight. To cross the Alps, a high-speed train would require a new kind of tunnel—one that would burrow through the very bottom of the mountains.

The Swiss had been contemplating such a project since the early nineteen-sixties but had balked at the cost—more than ten billion dollars, by current estimates. Finally, after a series of contentious public referendums, digging began on two new tunnels in 2002. The Lötschberg Base Tunnel, completed on schedule last year, runs for twenty-one miles through west-central Switzerland, linking the rail lines from Bern to Milan. The Gotthard Base Tunnel is fourteen miles longer and runs farther to the east, linking Zurich to Milan. The Lötschberg was relatively easy to dig: the granite and schist it traverses are hard but consistent. The Gotthard, however, lies at the very edge of the feasible. It will be the world's deepest traffic tunnel as well as the longest, and will run on a nearly flat gradient from Zurich, with a mile and a quarter of rock pressing down upon it. When it's finished, Stalder says, the Alps will disappear: "That is the result. Flat. For the international traffic, Switzerland will be Holland."

The northern end of the Gotthard Base Tunnel begins as a deep trench, carved into the palisades of Mt. Bälmeten. Great piles of gravel rise beside it, next to steel sheds, mud-spattered trucks, and a zigzagging network of conveyor belts. The site looks like a cement factory, which it essentially is. By the time the tunnel is complete, some two thousand miners will have taken more than three hundred million cubic feet of rock out of the mountains—the equivalent of five pyramids of Cheops, the Swiss transit authority likes to say. Some of the rock is being dumped into nearby Lake Lucerne, where it will form an artificial island for nesting birds. Much of the rest—about four million pounds a day—is crushed into gravel, mixed with cement, and stuffed back into the hole in the form of concrete, shoring up the tunnel walls with the mountain's own matter.

The trench ends in a pair of circular openings, like the double barrel of a shotgun. The two tunnels run in parallel, about a hundred and fifty feet apart, and are connected about every thousand feet so that passengers can escape from one to the other in case of fire. Each opening is about thirty feet in diameter and is flanked by massive concrete retaining walls. It's a purely functional piece of architecture made fantastical by its epic scale.

When Martin Herrenknecht and I arrived on foot one morning, trailing a team of engineers in blaze-orange smocks, we looked like members of some odd mythological quest. I half expected to find a pair of giant stone gates barring our way, etched with runes or dire Latin inscriptions. But there were just the two gaping holes. Herrenknecht grinned and quickened his pace. He was wearing a



"We find that pizza softens the blow of bad news."

bright-yellow hard hat—he's rarely photographed without one—and seemed to grow more relaxed the deeper he descended underground.

In the near distance, we could hear the low grumble of the worm at work in the mountain. To speed construction, the miners were excavating the tunnel from five points at once. While Herrenknecht's machines bored in from either end, and from two valleys along the sides, other workers were drilling and blasting their way out from areas where the ground was too unstable for tunnelling machines. A team of South African gold miners had been brought in to cut a vertical shaft at Sedrun, in the northern section. The shaft had been fitted with an elevator twice the height of the Empire State Building, and the miners were working their way toward the other teams.

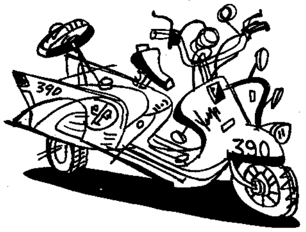
To the south, the Herrenknecht worms had begun by toiling through a long, undulating layer of kakirite—a sodden, crumbly material compressed between layers of granite. "You might as well call it shit," Herrenknecht told a reporter. As the machines chewed through it, the ceiling and walls caved in behind them, leaving cavernous spaces that had to be filled with concrete. For months in 2003, the machines had advanced as little as eight inches a day—at that pace, the tunnel would have taken seven hundred years to complete—before breaking through to granite again.

Here in the north, conditions were better. The rock was a sturdy gray gneiss, streaked with black. It was once a type of granite, when the Alps were young, but had been weakened by heat and compression as the mountains piled on top of it. "It is easy to dig," Michèle Moos, the red-haired manager of the site, told me. To cut the rock, the tunnelling machine had to apply only about seventy-five bars of pressure to its cutting head—about a thousand pounds per square inch. "The toughest rock in the south takes three hundred bars," she said.

We filed into the hole, feeling the thrum of the worm's engines through the soles of our feet. Digging had just begun in the eastern barrel of the tunnel, and the miners were backed up nearly to the entrance. The end of the machine was an open framework of steel beams, threaded with catwalks, conveyor belts, stepladders, and ventilation tubes. We climbed up inside it, led by Herrenknecht, and made our way toward the front, ducking under water pipes and squidlike tangles of power lines. The air, so close to the surface, was cool but uncomfortably humid. Water leached in constantly from the mountain above, leaving the walls slick and the ground puddled with gray muck. Like the rock, much of the water was continually collected, cleaned, and recycled—the tunnellers used about half a million gallons a day to mix concrete and cool down their equipment.

When we'd gone about a hundred yards, we came to a small white cabin with Plexiglas windows. Inside, a row of computer screens showed the machine's speed, cutting pressure, and position within the mountain. If the worm was a vehicle, this was the driver's seat. By varying the pressure to a set of pistons along the flanks, known as the Gripper, the operator could steer up and down or from side to side. (When he retired, Herrenknecht said, this was the job he wanted.) The system was equipped with lasers, G.P.S., and ground-probing radar, and could be astonishingly accurate. In the southern section of the tunnel, two Herrenknecht worms were less than two inches out of alignment after tunnelling for nearly nine miles.

The roar of the machinery, muffled inside the cabin, now seemed to redouble. As we shuffled down the catwalk, it began to tremble underfoot, then lurch and shake as if trying to buck us off. An acrid taste of burning oil filled my mouth, and the walls seemed to flex and heave around us. Herrenknecht grabbed my arm and pointed to the pistons thrust into the walls on either side, wedging the worm into the tunnel. "Bilger! Feel the power!" he shouted. "More than three hundred and fifty bars of pressure to the Gripper!" The machine was driven by ten electric motors, each with three hundred and fifty horsepower. (The entire site consumed about as much energy as a city of thirty thousand.) But the rock here was soft enough that the machine was operating at only quarter power. "If it was at one hundred per cent, the machine would go into the next tunnel," Moos said.

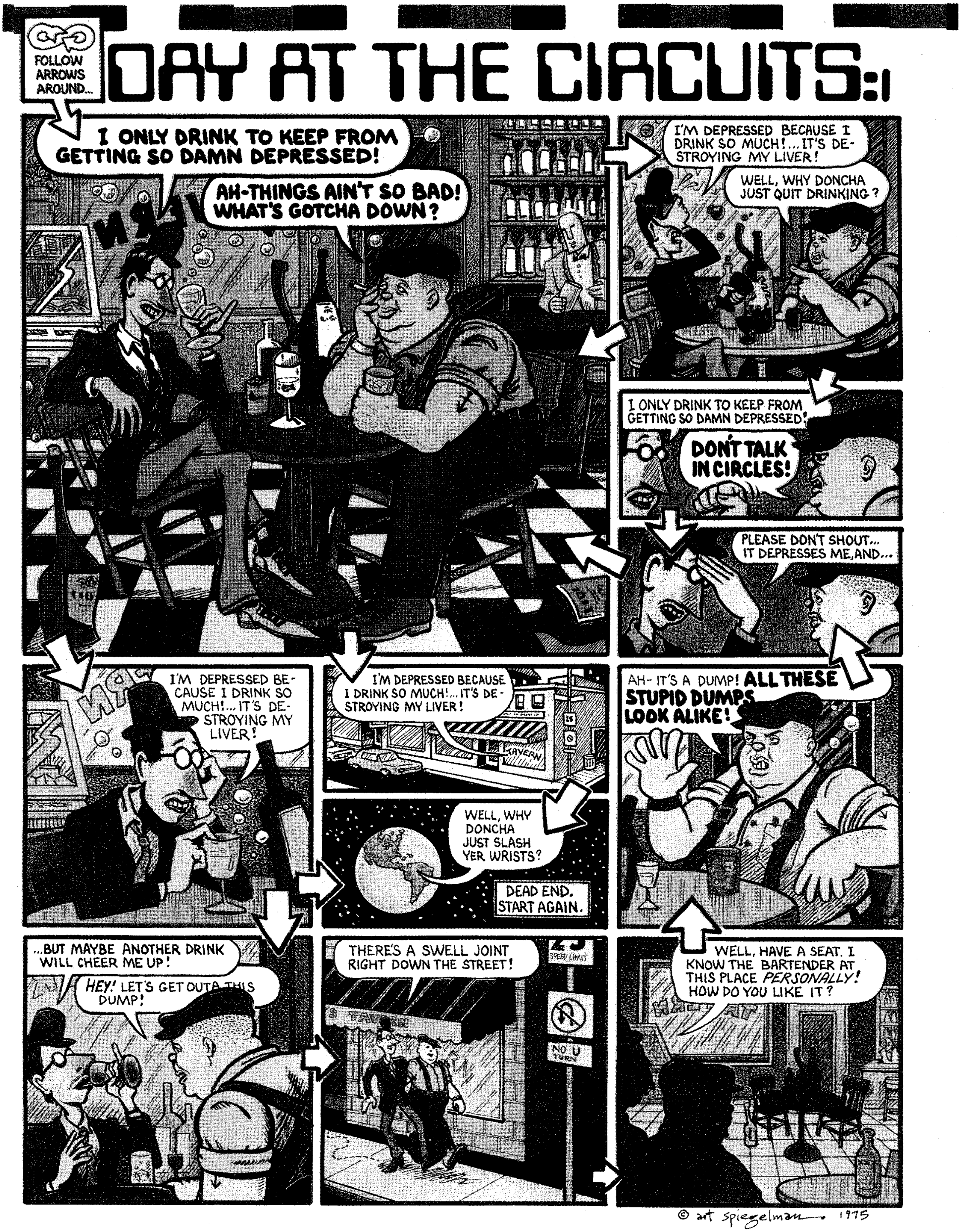


Herrenknecht stepped onto a platform at the front of the machine and stood with his fists on his hips. "It is excellent work!" he shouted. He pointed to another set of pistons, angled forward from the Gripper, that were driving the cutting head into the rock. The head was fitted with blunt disks, seventeen inches wide, made of an obdurate alloy of manganese, steel, and chromium. (The alloy's exact composition was a company secret, Herrenknecht had told me in Allmannsweier: "It's private like my toothbrush, or like my girlfriend.") As the cutting head turned, the crushed stone fell into spokelike dividers inside it, was funnelled onto a conveyor belt along its axis, and carried to dump trucks waiting outside. By the time the cutting head pulled back and the engines cut off, the teeth were red hot. "You can put an egg on them," Herrenknecht said. "Sunshine up."

The tunnel was suddenly silent. With a low rumble, the back half of the worm ratcheted forward two metres and planted its legs. The Gripper slid forward an equal distance and braced itself against the wall. Then the engines ignited for the next attack.

The base of the Alps is like the bottom of the ocean. To tunnel through it is to grope in the dark, under lethal pressure, in a thin pocket of air. It's impossible to know exactly what lies ahead, so miners depend on soil probes, core samples, and test drilling—the geological equivalent of peepholes. Relying on ten years' and close to two hundred million dollars' worth of testing, geologists have set a winding course for the Gotthard Base Tunnel, avoiding the highest peaks and the most perilous soil. They've identified some ninety "disruption zones" along the path—areas of fractured rock and abundant groundwater, where a machine might get stuck or swamped. (In one area, near Sedrun, the marble is so finely ground and under such terrific pressure that it came surging up through the test shafts like seltzer.) Still, most of the time, a miner's best bet is just to keep on digging. "Once you excavate the hole, it tends to close

COMIC STRIP BY ART SPIEGELMAN



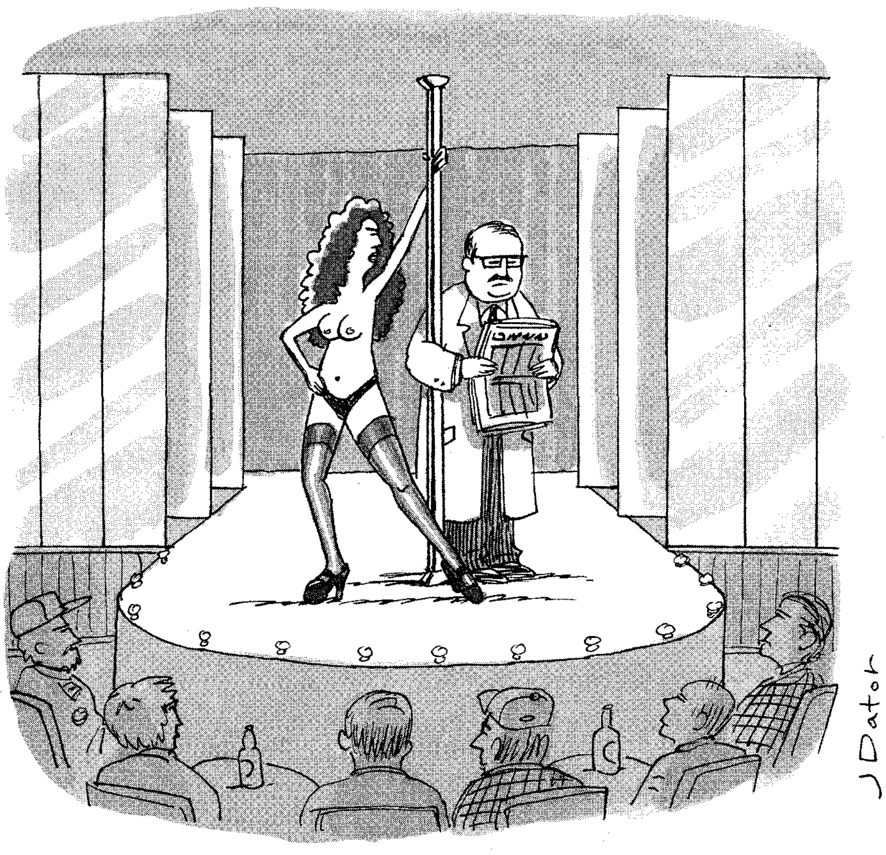
FOLLOW ARROWS AROUND...
DAY AT THE CIRCUITS:
I ONLY DRINK TO KEEP FROM GETTING SO DAMN DEPRESSED!
AH-THINGS AIN'T SO BAD! WHAT'S GOTCHA DOWN?
I'M DEPRESSED BECAUSE I DRINK SO MUCH!... IT'S DESTROYING MY LIVER!
WELL, WHY DONCHA JUST QUIT DRINKING?
I ONLY DRINK TO KEEP FROM GETTING SO DAMN DEPRESSED!
DON'T TALK IN CIRCLES!
PLEASE DON'T SHOUT... IT DEPRESSES ME, AND...
I'M DEPRESSED BECAUSE I DRINK SO MUCH!... IT'S DESTROYING MY LIVER!
I'M DEPRESSED BECAUSE I DRINK SO MUCH!... IT'S DESTROYING MY LIVER!
TAVERN
WELL, WHY DONCHA JUST SLASH YER WRISTS?
DEAD END. START AGAIN.
AH- IT'S A DUMP! ALL THESE STUPID DUMPS LOOK ALIKE!
...BUT MAYBE ANOTHER DRINK WILL CHEER ME UP!
HEY! LET'S GET OUTA THIS DUMP!
THERE'S A SWELL JOINT RIGHT DOWN THE STREET!
TAVERN
25 SPEED LIMIT
NO U TURN
WELL, HAVE A SEAT. I KNOW THE BARTENDER AT THIS PLACE PERSONALLY! HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
© art spiegelman 1975

up, because the mountain is pressing on it," Matthias Neuenschwander, the former resident engineer of the southern section of the tunnel, told me. "You need to go as fast as possible. There isn't much tactics in that."

One June day three years ago, five miles south of the village of Amsteg, two worms were working their way south through a layer of granite and gneiss more than a mile underground. They'd gone about five miles without incident, when the end of one shaft collapsed without warning. The miners had hit a pocket of hydrothermally disintegrated stone. It had been formed nearly a hundred million years ago, when the African and European tectonic plates collided, thrusting the Alps out of the ocean. In the process, a blast of superheated steam had struck the rock, dissolving the natural cements that bound it together. What was left was a powdery gravel saturated with water. Within minutes, it had cascaded through the machine, seizing up the cutting head and motors. The miners spent a week trying to dig the worm out with buckets and shovels, but the walls simply caved in around it again. The machine was stuck.

Miners are a moody lot, prone to poor morale when a project stalls. At the Gotthard, they dig around the clock in eight-hour shifts, separated by eight hours of maintenance work. Many have families abroad and see them only on vacations and long weekends. Although fatalities are relatively rare—the Gotthard project has had seven so far—the work is hard on the body. "There are accidents, all sorts of accidents," Moos admitted after our visit, over herring and white asparagus at a nearby *Gasthof*. "Things fall onto people, or they are just not paying attention. Some have problems with their ears from the noise, some with their lungs from the quartz dust. And the shaking isn't good for your back."

Under the circumstances, Herrenknecht's motivational style tends toward the military: equal parts intimidation, gruff humor, and appeals to his workers' esprit de corps. He is one of them. When I asked if it wasn't hard to spend so much of your life in tunnels, his eyes narrowed to glimmering slits and he gave a tight shake of the head: "It's fascinating, the underground." As for the physical toll, "It's good for your health!" he said, clapping Moos on the back. "You don't need a massage! We can invite all the people from the city to get shaked." Moos laughed, and said, "Yes, it is like wellness to work there: hot like the sauna, mud like the clay bath, vibration like the Power Plates. It makes your thighs strong."



"Do you mind?"

Herrenknecht leaves his employees both tremendous latitude and little room for indecision. "Martin doesn't like nervous people," Achim Kühn, the company's director of marketing, told me later. "He really hates them. Stay calm. Give him the feeling that you can solve the problem. Then everything is O.K."

A few years ago, when Herrenknecht's utility-tunnelling division was just getting started, one of its machines lost power while burrowing under an Autobahn in Bremen. Herrenknecht called in Werner Suhm, the head of the division. "He said, 'If you don't go in there and repair this shit, I give up the business and you are fired,' " Suhm told me. "So I went in myself with an electrical cable."

The tunnel lay forty feet underground. It was a foot and a half wide, a hundred and fifty feet long, and choked with service lines. By the time Suhm had crawled halfway down it, the entrance behind him looked three inches wide. "I was scared. I'm still scared," he told me. "How do I get out? How do I get out? I could smell my own stuff." It took Suhm half an hour to reach the machine and plug in the cable, and nearly two hours to crawl out again. Backward.

At the Gotthard, when the tunnel caved in south of Amsteg, the situation was more desperate. The machine was miles from any entrance and too deep to dig out from the surface. Although the miners could escape back out through the tunnel, the worm couldn't reverse. It was stranded like a submarine in the Mariana Trench.

Luckily, half the tunnel was still clear. Its eastern shaft, though only a hundred and thirty feet away, had narrowly skirted the disruption zone. The miners there began by tunnelling well past the stranded machine; then they sent in rescue teams from two directions at once. The first came in from the side, drilling and blasting a narrow tunnel toward the stranded machine. Another team dug around from the front till it was directly in the machine's path. Once in place, the first team injected the gravelly material with cement and a chemical gel, turning it into a lump

THE EEL

In the crowded yard, in the oily blue smoke
Of an eel supper, the eel looks on.

He is home for the summer. She is home for the summer,
Metamorphosing, the one in the other,

Androgynous, ambivalent, slipping in and out
Of the local, the universal,

Reading about itself, in the Book of the Eel,
As a disappearing species,

Toying with its own myths, renewing its passports,
Wondering whether or not a child is possible,

Longing, unconsciously, for autumn
As the tractor roars all night, and the pilot lights flash

In the fields outside. For the night phosphorescence
Of cities, the lifelong shedding of skins.

—*Harry Clifton*

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of concrete four stories high. The second team drove rows of pipes into the ground above the concrete, forming a steel umbrella that would prevent any further cave-ins. Finally, the concrete was blown clear. Five months after the initial collapse, the machine was freed.

The Gotthard was originally scheduled to open in 2012. As of this summer, it is five years late and three billion dollars over budget. Still, more than three-quarters of the tunnel has been excavated, and engineers say the most difficult sections are behind them. The Swiss, once prone to hand-wringing over the tunnel's progress, have shifted into celebratory mode. When the twenty-one-mile Lötschberg Base Tunnel—for now, the longest land traffic tunnel in the world—opened, last year, the tracks were blessed by a Catholic bishop and a Protestant minister. The first trains to pass through were filled with politicians and journalists, dining on Gruyère and *Bündnerfleisch*, and greeted with fireworks, brass bands, and crowds of children waving Swiss flags.

"That is Switzerland," Herrenknecht told me. "They take the challenge. If it money-wise increases, they get crazy. But they have enough power, experience. So they overrun the cost by five or ten per cent! If we build the technique, we build the future."

Because the Gotthard is only one of several hundred of Herrenknecht's projects, he spends a good deal of his time in the air. The company keeps a pair of private jets for site visits, one a Cessna Sovereign with a range of thirty-two hundred miles, and Herrenknecht has two full-time pilots on call. The tunnels lie in some of the world's roughest terrain, and landing conditions can be dicey: snow-swept runways in the Himalayas, broken tarmac in Kazakhstan. To visit the southern end of the Gotthard tunnel, for instance, Herrenknecht has to fly into a military airport in Lugano: a wheeling approach, without radar, between ten-thousand-foot peaks, then a stomach-roiling drop through the clouds, at four thousand feet per minute, across a glacial lake, and onto an abbreviated runway. The experience is sometimes "a little bit bumpery," he admits, but it's worth it for the time saved. He likes to return home at night to his bed in Allmannsweier.

"Bilger! This morning I cannot talk," he told me one day, as we were boarding one of his jets, bound for Barcelona. "I will read the paper." He plopped into the seat across from me and shook open a copy of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*. Reporters are an annoyance to Herrenknecht, Achim Kühn had warned me. He isn't in the habit of guarding his words, and some of his more inflammatory comments—about the weakness of the German welfare state, for example, or the laziness of its workers—could be quoted disapprovingly. The only reason Herrenknecht agreed to see me, Kühn suspected, was that my parents had grown up near the Black Forest and I spoke a dialect similar to his. Nevertheless, we mostly stuck to English, and he was always grousing about having to shuttle this American around. At one point, when we were flying above the Alps, he threatened to charge me two hundred dollars for the view.

On the flight to Barcelona, fortunately, Herrenknecht had brought his wife along—perhaps to distract me. Paulina Ariza-Suarez Herrenknecht is a small, ebullient Colombian, with freckled cheeks, round glasses, and a short black bouffant. The two met at a hotel in Miami in 1978—he was on a rare two-day holiday; she had missed her tour bus to Disney World—and began an improbable intercontinental courtship. "I hadn't been looking for a friend," she told me. "But he was very kind. It was clear that he was a very honest person—there was no doubletalk. And I found his eyes interesting. They were so awake. They seemed to say that he could do anything." She was twenty-eight and he was thirty-six.

After Miami, Herrenknecht wrote several letters to Paulina in Caracas, where she was working as a switchboard operator, tour guide, and part-time nanny. When she was slow to respond—"I didn't think he was serious"—he tracked her down through an international operator. Eventually, after more phone calls and letters, Herrenknecht persuaded her to come to Germany for an extended visit.

It was a disaster. Allmannsweier was in bloom when Paulina arrived—it was late summer—and Herrenknecht took her around the village to introduce her to the shopkeepers and his relatives. But the weather soon turned chill and gray, the people less welcoming. When Herrenknecht went back to work, Paulina found herself alone in his apartment, without a job, friends, or more than a few words of German. "The people were never bad to me," she says. "They were, in a way, kind. They just weren't interested. 'You can come if you want, but no one needs you here.' " By the following winter, she was flying home to South America, three months pregnant.

Herrenknecht spent the next year and a half trying to get her back. He sent letters at first, then money when his daughter was born. He twice flew out to visit her, and to ask her to marry him. Finally, in the summer of 1982, she agreed. She has since made her peace with Allmannsweier, she says: "This is probably the best land in the world. The people are very intelligent, very laborious." Her German has become fluent, and she has had two more children with Herrenknecht, all now grown: her elder daughter is an industrial designer, her second daughter is a stewardess, and her son is studying mechanical engineering. If anything, it's her husband who sometimes seems ambivalent about his home town.

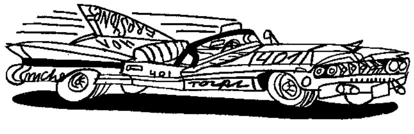
"Martin needs some fixed points in his life, and Allmannsweier is definitely the most important one," Kühn told me. Yet some locals complain that Herrenknecht has "lifted off"—he drives a silver Porsche Carrera around town—and he is often irritated by the town's stodginess. "There is one person on the *Ortschaftsrat*"—the village council—"I think he would kill him if he could," one local told me. Two years ago, Herrenknecht offered to build a funeral pavilion for the town cemetery, at his own expense. The council members accepted the offer, but only if they could tinker with the design. Herrenknecht told them to take it or leave it. "So we still don't have a funeral house, and people get wet in the rain," Renate Malter, the town's Protestant minister, told me. On another occasion, the council insisted that Herrenknecht cover the roof of a new factory with grass, to replace the green space that had been lost to it. Herrenknecht, in turn, threatened to put a herd of plastic cows on the building.

"There is a little warfare between them," Malter told me, when I visited her at the parsonage. "The council has to show that it has a little power. Then Herrenknecht gets angry when they won't give him what he wants." He is not a very diplomatic person, she acknowledged, but he can be very generous. Her husband, Axel, smiled and added, "*Der liebe Gott hat dem Herrenknecht einen Dickkopf gegeben.*" ("The Good Lord gave Herrenknecht a fat head"—a stubborn streak.) "But this fat head, this strong will, he needs. Without it he could not do what he does."

These days, Herrenknecht seems most at home among the Spanish. While the Swiss sweat over every centime, and the Germans recently cancelled their plans for a high-speed magnetic levitation train in Munich, the Spanish have embraced mass transit with a kind of crazed exuberance. Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, and Valencia are all expanding their metro lines, and new systems are being laid in Granada, Gijón, and Málaga. Spanish trains were once among the slowest in Western Europe—the Madrid-to-Barcelona line felt as if it were being hauled by mules. Now dozens of new rail tunnels are being driven through the mountains, connecting the major cities in a wheel-and-spoke pattern, radiating out from Madrid. If all goes as planned, the system will comprise more than six thousand miles of track by 2020, making it the largest high-speed rail project in Europe.

"I see for Spain a great future," Herrenknecht told me. We had landed in Barcelona and were being driven to a site northwest of the city, to see its newest subway tunnel. "Before, you always thought they are a holiday people," he said. "They have siesta. Now they are the hardest-working population in Europe—the absolute top. Spain is the new Switzerland."

Barcelona has more than a million and a half inhabitants, yet it's hemmed in by mountains on one side and the Mediterranean on the other. Rush-hour traffic often comes to a standstill downtown—"It's like a strap on your heart," Herrenknecht said—so the city is investing in public transportation. The new subway line will run for twenty-eight miles, dipping and rising between stations, connecting the suburban north to the industrial south and to the airport. The soil along the way is a loose mixture of clay and sand, and lies almost entirely under the water table—it's never more than two miles from the sea. "If you dig a hole, it closes up again behind you," Georg Siebert, one of Herrenknecht's chief engineers, explained, when we arrived at the site. "It's just like a hole in the seashore."



To keep the tunnel from collapsing, the miners were using one of Herrenknecht's Earth Pressure Balance machines. This had a sealed cutting head that injected the soil with a thick foam—its sharp ammonia scent filled the air. The foam stabilized the soil long enough for it to be excavated, then the miners lined the exposed walls with watertight concrete rings. The rings were carted down the tunnel in curved segments, on an automated trolley. Each segment was six feet wide and one foot thick, and weighed around fifteen thousand pounds. When it was ready to be installed, a robotic arm lifted it up with a vacuum plate and swung it into place along the wall. The segments fit together almost seamlessly: six segments to the circle, and a keystone on top. Like Brunel's shipworm, the machine was a self-contained factory, leaving a ready-made tunnel behind it.

Compared with Switzerland, everything here seemed to be moving at double time. The miners were paid bonuses for speed and for working on Sunday. They had no patience for interruptions—they glanced at our party with barely concealed annoyance—and no need for perfection. The trolley tracks at Erstfeld were perfectly straight; here they meandered a little, like strands of pasta, so the trolley wobbled as it ran. "The Spanish want speed," Herrenknecht said, grinning. "It is an excellent character, but they want speed." At some sites, he said, the Spanish hired two companies to dig each barrel of a tunnel, so the project would turn into a race. This tunnel had only one shaft, wide enough for two trains, but the miners were still working at a record pace. They'd installed twenty-two rings in the past twelve hours alone—a distance of a hundred and thirty-two feet.

Subways, once an astonishment of urban life, are becoming commonplace. Herrenknecht has more than a hundred machines tunnelling under cities worldwide, and orders for dozens more. Two of the machines recently completed new shafts for the Los Angeles light rail system; another will spend the next few years boring an enormous tunnel around Moscow, with room for a four-lane highway above and a subway below. "This is our bread-and-butter business," Kühn said. "If you are not a leader here, you have it tough."

The new tunnels will be good both for cities and for the environment, Herrenknecht says. Traffic will decrease, as will pollution and fuel consumption. Congested roads will give way to parks and pedestrian plazas. And yet in Barcelona, rattling back down the tunnel on the trolley, it was hard not to think that something was being lost. Even if Herrenknecht's vision comes true, and the roads that have been relieved of traffic don't simply encourage more people to start driving, city dwellers will spend more and more time underground. Rooms with a view will give way to rooms with no view at all.

In nine years, when the Gotthard Base Tunnel is finished, it will cut an hour off the trip between Zurich and Milan. It will streamline European trade and shield a dozen Swiss villages from the roar of passing trains, and many more from the noise and exhaust of congested highways. But for those sitting on the trains it will also turn a singularly breathtaking ride—up and over snow-dusted peaks and plummeting gorges—into a dim and desolate one. The world, as Helmut Stalder said, is becoming flat.

WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD?
If you cross, we'll all be so, so proud of you!
You're not nervous about it, are you?
Eventually, you're going to have to cross, so why not get it out of the way?
R. Chast

By that evening, we were back in Germany. Paulina had never been to Barcelona, and she'd heard that it was the most beautiful big city in Europe. But Herrenknecht had a lecture to prepare, and he wanted to go home. Much as he admired the Spanish and their energy, Barcelona's traffic drove him to distraction. "Every day sitting in the car. Not working. Wasting time. Waiting in a queue to go to the office. I could not do it," he said. "No, I am happy if I am home to see the pheasant and the deer in my garden."

Over the weekend, news had come in from other projects abroad. There was trouble in India, Herrenknecht said, where a subway in Delhi wasn't advancing as quickly as planned, and the press was full of rumors about one of the machines he was building for Moscow. The deal had been struck that spring with Roman Abramovich, and it bore the oligarch's grandiose mark. The Russian worm would be half again as large as any machine yet built, and four times the size of those which dug the Chunnel. When it was done digging under Moscow, the British press speculated, Abramovich hoped to send it to the province of Chukotka, where he was the governor, to dig a tunnel across the Bering Strait to Alaska. (Abramovich denied the rumor.) Herrenknecht smiled at the thought: fifty miles under a frozen sea, through untested soil in the remote Arctic. "I would approach it from both sides," he said, grabbing the air with his hands. "Start with two machines from each side and two machines in the middle. Make an island with excavation material. No problem."

In the meantime, there were other mega-projects to complete. A Herrenknecht machine was scheduled to dig an extension to New York's No. 7 line in 2009, and the Yangtze River tunnel was nearly finished, at four and a half miles long. Its two shafts would each contain a three-lane highway, connecting the city of Shanghai to the island of Changxing, then travelling on, by bridge, to the city of Dongtan.

For Herrenknecht, the Yangtze project was a way of coming full circle. Dongtan, its indirect beneficiary, was being billed as the world's first eco-city. Designed by the engineering firm Arup and scheduled to be completed in 2020, it would consist of three self-sustaining communities with a total population of five hundred thousand. It would be ringed by wetlands and organic farms and threaded with footpaths and bicycle lanes. Solar power, wind power, bioenergy, and recycled waste would provide all the electricity, and only cars with zero tailpipe emissions would be allowed in town.

"If it's green, no problem, I could live there," Herrenknecht said, and I wasn't surprised. Dongtan was a city after his own heart. It was designed by engineers and built by the world's fastest-growing superpower. It was perfectly modern, admirably efficient, yet not so different from the villages that Europeans built a thousand years ago. It was a place a lot like Allmannsweier. ♦

SHEHZAD NOORANI/WOODFIN CAMP/AURORA PHOTOS

FICTION

A SPOILED MAN

BY DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN

There he stood at the stone gateway of the Harounis' weekend home above Islamabad, a small bowlegged man with a lopsided, battered face. When the American wife's car drove up, turning off the Murree road, Rezak saluted, eyes straight ahead, not looking at her. She sat in the back and smiled at him from the milky darkness of the car's interior. What a funny little man! Once, he had happened to be walking past as she was driven through the gate, and she had waved. In the few weeks since, he had waited hours to receive this recognition from her, Friday when the family came, Sunday when they left. He had plenty of time.

The car continued up the winding flagstone drive and disappeared among the rows of jacaranda trees, blooming purple now in late April. Below lay the roadside town of Kalapani, the bazaar pierced by the horns of buses collecting passengers; above stood these walls, which enclosed ten acres of steep land, planted with apples, pine, jasmine, roses, and lilies that the wife had brought from America. The wind blew with a rushing sound through the pine branches and combed the fresh green grass sprouting all over the hillside after the winter rains.

He made himself useful. In May, pickup trucks full of summer flowers were brought from the nurseries that surrounded the city on the plains below. When the first truck arrived, he stood at the gate, watching the gardeners unload the pots, handing them down to each other and then carrying them up to the house—the loaded vehicle couldn't climb the steep drive. Without asking, he passed through the gate, which he had never done before, took one of the clay pots in his arms, and walked up to the house with it, rolling slightly on his down-at-heel shoes.

"Hey, old man, you better leave that before you hurt yourself," called a gardener standing in the bed of the pickup.

AMIT BHARGAVA/CORBIS

"I'm from the mountains, brother," Rezak said. "I can carry you up on my back, and one of these in each hand."

The pickup driver, who stood to one side smoking a cigarette, grinned.

The old majordomo, Ghulam Rasool, had strolled down to watch the show, a potbellied figure with a tall lambskin hat resting at a slight angle on a fringe of white hair. He sent one of the gardeners up to get his hookah and, comfortably settling himself in the watchman's chair by the gate, looked out over the valley below. At midday, he said to Rezak, "Come on then, and break bread with us."

Rezak looked down at his feet. "I'd need to put stones in my gizzard like a chicken to digest the rich food that you good people eat."

The majordomo tried to convince him, and the gardeners also pressed, but Rezak remained stubborn. "You didn't ask for help—you don't owe me anything."

"Suit yourself then," Ghulam Rasool said finally. The gardeners walked up the drive, talking, and Rezak stood watching them, wishing he had accepted. He was alone now. In the distance, he could see a swimming pool with curving sides, overhung by chinar trees and willows. Melancholy invaded him, and also peace, borne by the whirring of cicadas nestled among the rocks that punctuated the grounds of the estate. He took a bag from his pocket, undid the elastic band, and tucked a quid of tobacco in his cheek, chopped green *naswar*.

In the Kalapani bazaar, he ate at his usual teahouse, day-old bread soaked in milk, prescribed by a quack homeopath against a fistula that had tormented him for many years. The waiter brought the sopping bread and, when the crowd subsided, came over to have a few words about the flow of tourists up to Murree, more each year, this season begun so early. Lonely as he was, Rezak relied upon his welcome in the teahouse, his connection with it. When the older chickens at the poultry sheds where he worked were culled, Rezak would bring down one of the healthier birds, asking the teahouse to cook it, as a holiday from his bread diet. He shared with whoever was there, insistent, forcing his friend the waiter to eat.

"There, look, I've taken some," the waiter would say, pulling off a wing. Even he, hardened by a diet of stale leftovers from the kitchen, was dubious about eating this time-expired bird.

"No, you have to really eat." Once, Rezak even became angry about it, leaving abruptly, the chicken still on the table.

After finishing his lunch, Rezak walked through a government pine forest to the poultry sheds. The owner had bribed the wardens to allow construction extending into the forest, and each summer his men set fires at the base of pines planted by the British a hundred years earlier, in order to kill the trees and open up more space. Rezak came to his home—not the workers' quarters attached to the sheds but a hut that he had built for himself, a little wooden cubicle, faced with tin and mounted on thick legs. Several decades before, in his early twenties, he had fallen out with his step-brothers over shared property up in the mountains, a few acres of land on which they grew wheat and potatoes, bordered by apricot trees. Outmaneuvered, dispossessed, he had come down to the plains, vowing never to see his family again. This box had become his home and consolation. Each place he worked, he set it up, and then, when he quarrelled with the other workers or the boss, as he invariably did, he would take it apart and cart it away—always he kept a store of money, untouched no matter what, enough to pay for trucking this little house, this nest, to whatever place his heart had set on next. This was his guarantee of independence.

Opening the heavy padlock, he lifted the door hatch and climbed in, tucking his shoes into a wooden box nailed below the cramped hatch. Tiny red lights, run off an electrical connection drawn from the poultry sheds, were strung all over the ceiling and warmed the chamber. He could sit but not stand inside, and had covered the floor with a cotton mattress, which gave off a ripe animal odor, deeply comforting to him. A funnel and pipe served as a handy spittoon, a mirror and shelf allowed him to shave without getting out of bed, an electric fan cooled him. Photographs of actresses plastered the walls and ceiling, giving him company. Fickle and choosy, he shuffled and moved them, discarding one, stripping the photographs from the wall with a cold expression. For several months, he had been favoring a Pathan actress known as the Atomic Bum, who had wagged her way through a string of hit movies in the past year.

A few days later, loitering around the gates of the Harouni estate again, Rezak decided to go in, stepping through a narrow entry set into the wall. The owners would be in Islamabad for the week, and earlier he had seen the watchman down in the bazaar. By climbing the slope of the mountain opposite, he had observed the household routine, marked the servants' quarters, watched the owners sitting on a terrace, brightly clothed. Close up, the house seemed to him ugly, made of large rough-hewn stones, with a vast wall of glass across the front, looking out over the valley and down to Islamabad, forty kilometres below. Nothing to it—no metalwork, no paint, no decorative lights, only size to recommend it. The house blended into the landscape, as if it were one of the boulders littering the mountain slope.

He found Ghulam Rasool sitting in a chair under a tree, reading a newspaper.

"Ah, the volunteer," he said amiably. "Come on then, have a pull on the hookah."

Rezak sat down on the edge of a charpoy, dangling his short legs. "I'm killing myself with this poison instead." He spat and then dipped coarse green tobacco under his gum.

"You work up in Ayub's sheds, don't you?"

"When Ayub needs me, I work. He pays me in dying chickens and loose change." He tried to make a joke of it.

"That's what I hear—Ayub shaves both sides and then trims out the middle piece."

Rezak laughed mirthlessly. "The way I'm going, soon I'll be eating grass." He paused. "I've been thinking. I can do woodwork. I know about trees. I'll carry things, work in the garden. Feed me and I'll work here and do whatever you want. You don't even have to give me a room. I've got a portable cubicle that I live in—you can stick me in some corner."

The owner of the estate, Sohail Harouni, the son of a man who made a fortune in cement and other industries, had, while he was at university in the United States, married an American woman named Sonya. "No, I really love it here," she would say defensively when asked at a party. "It's strange, it's like a drug. I think I miss the States so much—and I do—and then after a month there I'm completely bored. Pakistan makes everything else seem washed out. This is my place now. I don't do enough, but I feel as if here I can at least do something for the good." She did fit in more than most foreign women. She studied Urdu, to the point where she could communicate quite effectively, made an effort to meet Pakistanis outside the circuit in Islamabad. Even her husband's catty aunts admitted that she was one of the few foreigners who wore Pakistani clothes without looking like either an Amazon or a Christmas tree.

And yet, though she insisted that she loved Pakistan, sometimes it all became too much. "I hate it, everyone's a crook, nothing works here!" she would sob, fighting with her husband. Then she would storm out to her car and retreat to the Kalapani house, forty minutes away, arriving unannounced, withdrawing darkly into the master bedroom, while the servants scrambled to prepare her meal. In the evening she would wander the large stone house, slowly becoming calm, speaking with her friends on the telephone. Her husband would drive up to spend the night with her, bringing their little son as a pledge of their love, and they would make peace.

It happened that, soon after Rezak made his plea to Ghulam Rasool, Sonya had a huge row with her husband and ran away to Kalapani. The next morning, she sat drinking coffee on the sunny terrace, which had a view out over the government forest, now heavily logged by poachers, and then down to Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The strain of the fight had shaded into a desire for simplicity and order, an almost pleasant teariness.

Ghulam Rasool came up from the garden, coughing so that she would not be startled. Of all the servants, he was the one she most trusted with her son. She herself felt comfortable with him, with his gentle, stoic manner, with his prayers and his superstitions.

Her blond hair held back by a black velvet band, she wore a simple white blouse, white slacks, and lay on a divan, immaculate, reading a slender volume of poetry. She had been an English major, and turned to a handful of familiar books as a restorative—Yeats or Rilke, Keats, to be taken as needed.

"Excuse me, Begum Sahib. I wanted to ask, it's time to think about the roses."

She knew that he wanted to soften her attitude toward her husband. In any case, she liked him to come and talk with her, and they used as a pretext his supervision of the garden, although he had always been a valet and knew almost nothing about flowers or trees.

She put down her book, and they considered the roses and the placement of the annuals.

"Begging your pardon, the local people drive their goats into the Ali Khan orchard, and they're destroying the saplings that you brought from America. There's an old man. He can't do hard labor, but he's a reliable person. His family abandoned him. He even has his own portable hut—he'll take it there and live as a guard. You don't have to give him a salary. Just food and a few rupees for pocket money."

But she wanted to give the old man the same as all the others. It made her happy to think of spoiling him in his old age.

Newly hired, Rezak moved to the Ali Khan lands, a walled parcel of four or five acres just up the road from the main house. Like the other servants and gardeners, he received a salary of nine thousand rupees a month, more than he had ever made in his life. The gardeners from the big house transported his cubicle in pieces, then helped him reassemble it next to a hut that was already standing there, a single stone-walled room, with an open hearth, which Rezak could use as a storeroom and kitchen. The land had no electrical connection, so he bought oil lamps, which glowed soothingly as he went about his evening chores, his routine of dinner and bedtime.

The season turned hot just as Rezak moved to his new home, coloring the green fruit on the apple and peach and pear trees imported from America. He devoted all his grateful heart to the small orchard, watering the trees with a bucket from the stream that ran through the property, working manure into the soil with a spade. Taking a bus to Islamabad, with his own money he bought three grapevines, carried them back wrapped in straw, and trained them up the legs of his tin-clad cubicle. He planted radishes, corn, cauliflower, onions, peas, more than he alone could eat, so that as they ripened he could take baskets of produce to the big house. With his second paycheck he bought a goat for milk—before, in his previous jobs, it would have cost many months' savings.

One day, the master and his wife took some guests to the Ali Khan land for a picnic lunch. In the morning, servants brought carpets and divans, tubs full of ice for the wine, grills for the meat, firewood in case the party lasted into the night. Rezak spent the morning hours ferrying boxes and chairs and rugs down from the main road to the picnic spot, taking the biggest loads, pushing himself forward, claiming precedence on his plot of land.

The guests arrived, Pakistanis and foreigners, a dozen or so of them, and were soon sprawled on the carpets, drinking wine, resolved into several groups. Walking briskly down the steep path, sure-footed, holding a floppy yellow sun hat with a trailing ribbon in her hand, Sonya had said to Rezak as she passed, "Salaam, baba." His heart, his soul melted, as if a queen had spoken to a foot soldier. She had given him charge of the garden, of the trees that she had brought from her homeland, and now she was seeing the results of his husbandry for the first time.

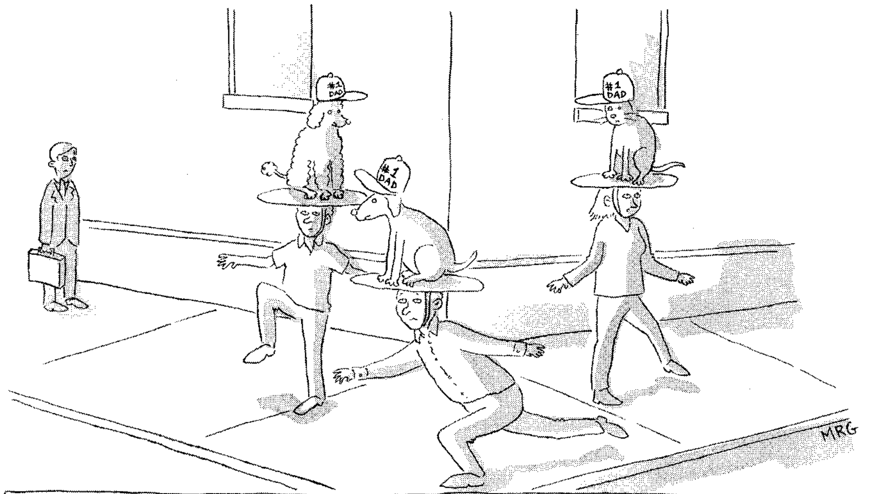
All the other servants knew what to do—Ghulam Rasool poured the wine and passed the hors d'oeuvres, a cook readied the fire and skewered kebabs on metal rods, the gardeners spread out as a kind of picket, to prevent anyone from looking over the walls. Rezak's shyness and diffidence contested with a desire to take part, to show off all the work he had done in the orchard. He squatted under an apple tree, trying not to look at the sahibs, pulling up sprigs of grass, tying them into figures and knots, hoping to be summoned. Restless, he knelt down by the cook and took over the job of tending the fire, pushing aside the weedy boy who acted as the cook's helper.

Sohail Harouni was a handsome, cheerful man with not a care in his life, who enjoyed giving parties more than anything else. After a few glasses of wine, he called a young valet and told him to bring the stereo from the main house and hook it up. A driver raced to Murree, ten kilometres up the mountain, and bought a roll of heavy wire. Glasses in hand, the guests and even the host enthusiastically helped string the wire from a roadside shop down through the trees.

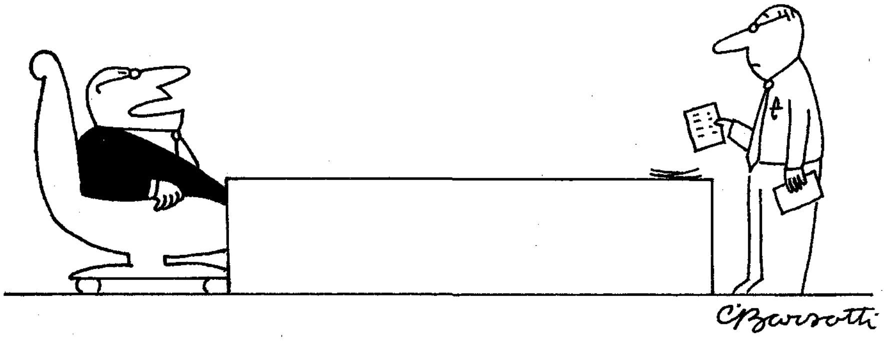
When the party had come far along, when Harouni and the guests were standing in a circle, drinks in hand, gesturing expansively, speaking loudly, Sonya walked away from the group. Looking along the length of the valley, she caught sight of Rezak's cabin, several terraces below the picnic spot. Finding the path, she picked her way toward it, and Rezak, who had been watching her, quickly followed, leaping down a steep bank so that he could receive her at his little hut, saluting.

"It's wonderful!" Sonya exclaimed, circling around the cubicle, Rezak at her heels. "Hey, everyone," she called to her guests, going over to where she could be heard. "Come see."

Short, bowlegged Rezak bustled around, showing off the appliances and the refinements—the pipe that drained the inside spittoon, the cupboards and drawers set into the outside walls for his tools and clothes and kit, windows that could be propped open or removed entirely, a skylight of red glass, thick rush matting on the roof to keep the inside cold or hot, with a rubber bladder fixed



PEOPLE FOR THE ESOTERIC TREATMENT OF ANIMALS



"Well, get some new numbers or I'm getting a new numbers guy."

• •

to the walls that shot water up through a pipe when he squeezed it, wetting the rushes—evaporative cooling. Sonya poked her head inside the stuffy, lurid chamber, considered the photographs of movie starlets plastered on the walls. The guests peered about, inspecting this nest, its door and windows ajar, like a car on a dealer's lot with hood and trunk propped open.

"If there's electricity, then it's really something," Rezak said, eager, grinning with all his teeth, surrounded by the sahibs and the memsahibs. "I used to have colored lights inside. There's work to be done, that's true. It's all broken from carrying it up and down and all over." In his exuberance, he pulled at a cupboard door that wouldn't open till it tore off in his hand. Even this didn't dampen him. "See, that's one way to take it apart!"

"That's the man's whole life in a nutshell, isn't it?" the Australian Ambassador, a tall man with a correspondingly tall forehead and ginger hair, remarked.

As they were returning to the picnic, Sonya said to her husband, "The poor man should have electricity for a radio and for lighting. He lives all alone here—imagine how bored he is."

"Are you kidding?" Harouni said. "These guys don't get bored."

But, after the party, the wire that had been laid temporarily so that there would be music remained in place—for the next party. Rezak strung lights on the outside of the cubicle, like wedding decorations, and hung a light bulb in the stone hut where he cooked. He bought a radio and, finally, a cheap television, something he had never even thought of wanting. He would lie in his little cocoon, soft red lights glowing, the television volume turned up, and drink cup after cup of tea kept hot in a vacuum thermos, a refinement that made him smack his lips with appreciation.

Sitting in the Kalapani teahouse one morning, Rezak met a young man who lived near his childhood village, high in the mountains.

"The government pushed the road up to Koti," the man told him. "The bus runs from Kowar now. That changed things, you can bet."

Hearing of the places he had known all his life made Rezak restless. He had left home determined never to go back. Now he wondered what his stepbrothers had told the neighbors about his disappearance. He wanted his family to know of his success.

"You and I grew up drinking from the same streams, breathing the same air. You have to accept my hospitality now that we've met. I beg you. Come for a cup of tea, and then I'll walk you back down here." He took the man by the arm and almost dragged him out of the tea stall.

He hurriedly carried a charpoy onto the terrace in front of the stone cooking hut, put a pillow on it, ran inside and lit a fire in the hearth, then brought out a table, wiping it with a rag. Luckily, he had a packet of biscuits and he arranged these on a plate and carried them out with the tea.

The man knew of Rezak's family, but had little news of them. Forgetting his bitterness and the wrong they had done him, Rezak began speaking of his stepbrothers and nephews, of their fertile land, of the well near their fields.

"God has been good to me, more than I deserve. I have only one wish, that he had given me sons of my own, as my brothers have." He ran his hands over his face.

Rezak had not been able to resist boasting of his salary.

The man considered for a moment, his eyes alighting on a locked trunk inside the cooking hut that must be full of clothes and who knew what else. He looked at the neat vegetable patch and at the two goats—Rezak had bought another when fodder ran low in the forest and they were cheap. The man had been shown the weird little cubicle, furnished with a radio, a television even.

"Look, my cousin has a daughter. Something went wrong when she was born, and she's a bit simple. But she can cook and sew and take your goats out to graze. She's quite pretty even. She's young enough to bear you a son. Her father can barely take care of his other children. Why don't you let me arrange a marriage?"

"You're making fun of an old man," Rezak replied. But hope and desire pierced his heart when he thought of it. A woman in his house, even one who was not right in the head! And she could bear him a son, and that would be worth anything at all. Now that Rezak had money, the boy would go to school, he would learn to read and write, become—Rezak could not even imagine what. The son of an old servant at the main house had become a doctor and now continually begged his father to retire and come live with him. Rezak would die happy after that.

They spoke back and forth all afternoon. In the end, they agreed not only that the girl would be without a dowry but even that Rezak would pay a quite substantial amount of money for her, which the family would take in installments.

A few days later, the father delivered the feebleminded girl. The girl's family had not come, and the two men did not celebrate the marriage, but brought the *maulvi* quietly to perform the *nikah*. When the father left, the girl followed him and cried, until they were forced to lock her in the hut.

After seeing the father onto the bus, Rezak wandered down through the bazaar, stopping to talk for a minute with the man who sold samosas, saying nothing of his marriage, but saving it for himself. He felt more equal now among these people, the shopkeepers, passersby, families. Someone waited for him also, the house he returned to would not be empty.

The poor girl must be frightened, he thought, and turned homeward, stopping to buy a three-kilo box of sweets, fat yellow ludhoos, ghulab jaman, barfi, shahi tukrah.

He rattled the chain as he opened the lock, so that she wouldn't be startled. She wore makeup, lipstick that had smudged, rouge that made her cheeks almost pink, new clothes made of shiny white cloth—at least that much had been done to celebrate their wedding day. It pleased him that she reached and covered her head with her dupatta—shy before him, her husband.

He sat across from her. She kept her eyes cast down.

He opened the box of sweets, carefully unknotting the string, took a ludhoo, and held it out to her on his palm, whispering, "Take this, it's O.K., don't be afraid." He held it there. "Go on." And after a moment, without looking up, she reached out and took it.

Gradually, she became accustomed to living with him. Once he saw that she would not run away, he let her roam as she wanted. The girl, a tiny thing of nineteen or twenty, had an impediment and spoke not in sentences but rather in strings of sound, cooing or repeating words—her condition was really worse than Rezak had expected—but when she settled in he found that she could more or less cook.

He let her sleep in the stone hut, until one night, as he was watching television in his cubicle, she cautiously lifted the door flap, stood absorbing the lit red chamber for a moment, and then nimbly leaped in, eyes fixed on the television. After that, she always slept with him.

As an adolescent boy, Rezak had been married, so long ago that he couldn't remember what his bride looked like. She had died in childbirth, less than a year after the marriage, and the child had died, too. Now, after so many years, Rezak again had a companion in his home. Life and hope, the flames of individuality that had burned out to nothing, to smoke, again flickered within him. Returning at night from the bazaar with a treat of late-season mangos or a bit of meat, or stopping work in the orchard at noon to have his midday meal, which the girl warmed and served to him with hot chapatis, he looked forward to her chattering. She had a pretty, almost animal way of watching him while he ate, perched beside him, and after he finished she brought him a glass of water from the clay pot. In the evening, before he came in, she made tea, and when he groaned because of the aching in his legs she massaged him. Gradually, he found himself able to communicate with her, and, more important, she communicated with him, showed happiness when he returned at night, cared for him when he felt ill or sad. She did not, however, bear him a child.

Now that his wife cooked for him and pastured the goats, Rezak had less to do, especially after the trees lost their leaves and work in the orchard ceased. His wife sat in the dark smoky hut, cooing to herself. He would often go down to the teahouse in Kalapani bazaar and sit for several hours, watching buses fill and lumber off up the mountain to Murree or to Kashmir, or race, brakes squealing at the curves, down to the cities, honking their horns to call the passengers. He strolled idly through the bazaar, wearing a new woollen vest and carrying a walking stick; or he went to the big house and sat smoking a hookah with Ghulam Rasool.

Returning to his hut at dusk after one of these excursions, he found that the fire had burned out in the hearth and his wife was gone. The goats, too, were missing, although she should have brought them in by this time. Sitting in the cold room, he stared at the calendar nailed up on the wall, which showed an elaborate Chinese pagoda. He rubbed his hands together, trying to control his anger. Twice before, she had disappeared at nightfall, and he'd found her far down in the valley, cowering behind some rocks. When he approached her, she grew frightened and covered her face with her hands.

At dark, she still had not returned. Rezak took the lantern, lit the tiny flame, and went out, the two goats scrambling in, bleating, when he opened the wooden gate that led down into the valley.

One of the neighbors called, "Hey, Rezak, can't it wait till morning?"

"What can I tell you. My poor old lady's disappeared again."

The neighbor sent a little boy to help with the search.

Rezak walked all over and called and called. He went home, hoping that she would be there waiting for him, but he saw no glimmer of light in the cooking hut. As he sat in the cold, the sound of twigs breaking as he laid the fire seemed particularly loud. The fire caught, crackling, slowly warming the room. Mechanically he threw a handful of tea in the kettle, boiled the water, mechanically poured it into the cup. He didn't have it in him to be angry now. Without eating dinner, without turning on the television, as he did every night, he lay alone in the dark cabin, wondering what could have become of her. What if she was lying hurt somewhere in the forest?

In the morning he woke before first light, hurriedly dressed, and went out. He didn't know where to look, which direction to turn. Living alone for years, he had learned not to ask for help. Neighbors would do whatever they could once or twice or five times, but, ultimately, they would grow cold and resentful. He walked along the paths that she might have taken, then deep into the woods to the places where she cut grass. Once, he saw a cloth that he thought might be her shawl, but coming close he saw that it had been rained on and must have been lying there for days.

Finally, he went to ask the Harouni retainers for help. Going into the servants' common room, he found Ghulam Rasool lying peacefully on a charpoy, his unlit hookah beside him. The fireplace chimney had backed up, as it always did, filling the low-ceilinged room with layers of acrid pine smoke.

As Rezak walked into this familiar room, he broke down for the first time. His arms hung loosely as he shuffled up to the bed and stood with his face contorted.

"My wife disappeared," he blurted

out, before he had even said salaam. "I can't find her anywhere. She's gone." Flat tears slipped out of his gummy eyes and disappeared into the wrinkles of his face. Remembering himself, he reached down and shook Ghulam Rasool's hand respectfully.

"What do you mean, disappeared?" Ghulam Rasool asked, startled. Squeezing Rezak's arm to make him sit on the charpoy, he called out through the door, "Hey, one of you boys, come here."

Four gardeners answered the summons and, after asking a few questions, ignored Rezak. They huddled together and laid out their plan, eager as a pack of hounds, then headed out, their wooden staffs tapping quickly as they walked off on separate paths.

Late at night, they straggled back, one by one, having found no trace of the woman. In the morning, early, they went out again, determined to find her. They searched the mountains, the farthest terraced fields, went to the nearby villages. The next day, again they searched from dawn to dusk, and then the next, but with less and less determination. One of them asked at every bus stop from Murree down to Rawalpindi. Another went all the way to the girl's family home up in the mountains, almost in Kashmir, but they had seen nothing of her—in any case, she couldn't possibly have made the long journey alone.

Finally, only Rezak kept searching. He forgot where he had already been, returning to the same places, as if this time he might find her there.

One morning, getting ready to go out and continue the search, he sat down again, took off his coat, and lay down on the bed. Imbecile, chattering—but she was gone, dead or stolen, taken to the brothels of Pindi or Karachi. He prepared himself to bear the loneliness again.

Every year at Christmas, the Harounis gave a big party at Kalapani, with roast goose, a twenty-foot tree in the entrance hall of the house, and a ho-hoing Santa Claus for the children. Trucks brought logs for a bonfire from the Harounis' farm down on the plains, so that late at night the servants could grill spicy, greasy kebabs on the coals for the heavy drinkers and mull cauldrons of spiced punch for the rest. The guests came up from Islamabad singly or in long chains of cars, blowing in through the door with wrapped presents and bottles of wine and champagne, which Ghulam Rasool piled on a long table in the hall.

Before dinner, the mistress came into the kitchen. The cook stood rubbing his hands on his apron, sidelined in his own domain, as she took a big bowl under her arm and poked with a spatula at the mashed potatoes, which the cook had already beaten to a creamy smoothness.

Ghulam Rasool had been following her impassively as she performed her inspection.

"Excuse me, Begum Sahib, may I trouble you with a small request?"

"Of course," she said, touching him lightly on the shoulder. He had become accustomed to this, although at first it had disturbed him.

Briefly, he explained about the disappearance of Rezak's wife.

"But Ghulam Rasool, you should have told me right away. What can I do?"

Ghulam Rasool had an encyclopedic knowledge of his master's friends, their power, their wealth, and he took great pride in these connections. When he saw Omar Bukhari, the son of the Inspector General of Police, arrive at the party, he had sent a gardener to fetch Rezak and told him to wait in the kitchen.

"If Bukhari Sahib would speak to the police in Murree . . ."

She went into the living room and found Bukhari looming over a French girl, who had come with someone else, insisting that she must let him arrange a trip into the tribal areas of the Frontier, which were off-limits to foreigners.

"Really, Delphine, you should go—it's amazing, and you'll never have the chance otherwise," the hostess said. "Omar, can I pull you away for a moment?"

Bukhari followed her to the candlelit dining room. "So, Ghulam Rasool Sahib, what's going on?" he asked.

The Harounis' friends all knew Ghulam Rasool and joked that he had more power than many federal ministers.

Ghulam Rasool explained, emphasizing the girl's attractiveness to make it seem like an abduction by one of the gangs who kidnap or buy women for prostitution—a scenario in which the police could help, since these things generally happened under their protection and they received a cut of the take.

"We'll break the bastards' legs when we catch them," Bukhari, who had been drinking quite heavily, said. "Go fetch the husband."

Rezak came in, trembling, and couldn't explain himself, but stood with a grief-stricken face, expectant, as if his wife might there and then materialize through the power of this important sahib.

Bukhari had dealt with many cases of missing women, and knew that the family was almost always involved. He fixed Rezak with a hard gaze. "Who took her? The father? Did the family take her back?"

"Only God above in his mercy knows, sir—I came home one night and she had gone, I couldn't find her, sir. I'm an old man, I'm nothing . . ."

Recalling the presence of his hostess, Bukhari relented. Flipping open his tiny cell phone, he punched a number.

"Get me the D.S.P. Murree." After a moment, a voice came on the line. "Hello, Qazmi, how are you? This is Omar Bukhari. Yes, everything's fine. I'm in Kalapani, at the house of Mr. Sohail Harouni. The wife of one of his servants has been abducted. I want her back by tomorrow night . . . Yes . . . No, come to the house in the morning and take down the details. I want you personally to handle this." Without saying goodbye, he snapped shut the phone.

He smiled at Sonya. "Done."

Rezak, who understood none of the conversation, which had been conducted in English, crouched and touched Bukhari's knee with both hands, began to speak and then fell silent, bowing his head. Ghulam Rasool raised him up by the arm and led him away.

In the morning, the Deputy Superintendent of Police himself showed up at the house, in his official Jeep, flying a police flag, and accompanied by a pickup full of policemen carrying beat-up rifles. Unfortunately, the Harounis and all the guests had already left for Islamabad. The D.S.P. sat on a chair placed in the middle of the hall, with the quivering staff lined up in front of him.

"Where's the husband?"

Ghulam Rasool, the only one not perturbed by this policeman with stars on his shoulders, explained that Rezak lived at another property, down the road.

"Get him."

Rezak came in, breathless, led by a policeman.

"So, old man," the D.S.P. stated, "they tell me your wife has run away." He began asking questions, in a low voice. Though at first he spoke gently, his tone soon became irritated.

"What you're saying is, her parents sold her to you. Where did you get that much money?"

Ghulam Rasool stepped forward. "Sir, she's not well in the head—this man took her out of kindness as much as anything. And then our sahib is very good to us, he gives us everything we need and more."

"Women don't just fly away on their own. Either this man knows something about it or she's in Karachi by now. The best thing is for him to be quiet."

The D.S.P. looked intently at Rezak for a moment, clasping his hands on his stomach, then stood up.

"Please give my regards to Harouni Sahib," he said to Ghulam Rasool, speaking politely and almost formally. "I am always at his service." He begged off taking a cup of tea, claiming that he had an appointment.

Watching the policeman and his escort drive off, Ghulam Rasool said to Rezak, "Better stay away from the bazaar for a couple of days. He seemed like a pretty rude character."

Just after dusk, four policemen in an unmarked car picked up Rezak from his hut and took him to the police post at Tret, twenty kilometres down the road.

"Did you find her?" he had asked, when they came to his cubicle.

The youngest policeman, the only one in uniform, said, "Yes, yes, don't worry."

But he grabbed Rezak by the shoulder, took his arms, and handcuffed him. Rezak said nothing more, and allowed them to do as they liked.

Only when they put him in the back of the car did Rezak ask, "But what have I done? Where are you taking me?"

"Shut up, baba," said the young policeman, who up till then had been quite gentle.

They walked him into a windowless room in the police station and hung him up on a hook by the manacles around his wrists, so that his feet touched the ground only when he stood on his toes.

He hung on the wall all evening, long past the time when it seemed possible that the excruciating pain in his shoulders and back could be borne. In the next room, policemen came and went, but he was no longer aware of them.

At one point, a policeman who had just come in from outside asked, "Who's he?"

"No idea. The D.S.P.'s guys sent him in. Strip, polish, and paint, I suppose."

"Ah," the newcomer said. He went out, singing, "The night is made for lovers . . ."

After midnight, a large man wearing civilian clothes came into the room. Two uniformed policemen came behind him and shut the door.

"All right, let's see," the big man said. "So, what's your name, old man?"

"Mohammed Rezak, sir." He began weeping and blubbering. "I beg you, I've done nothing, I'm innocent, and now you've hung me up here. I beg you, remember, there's a God above who judges everything . . ."

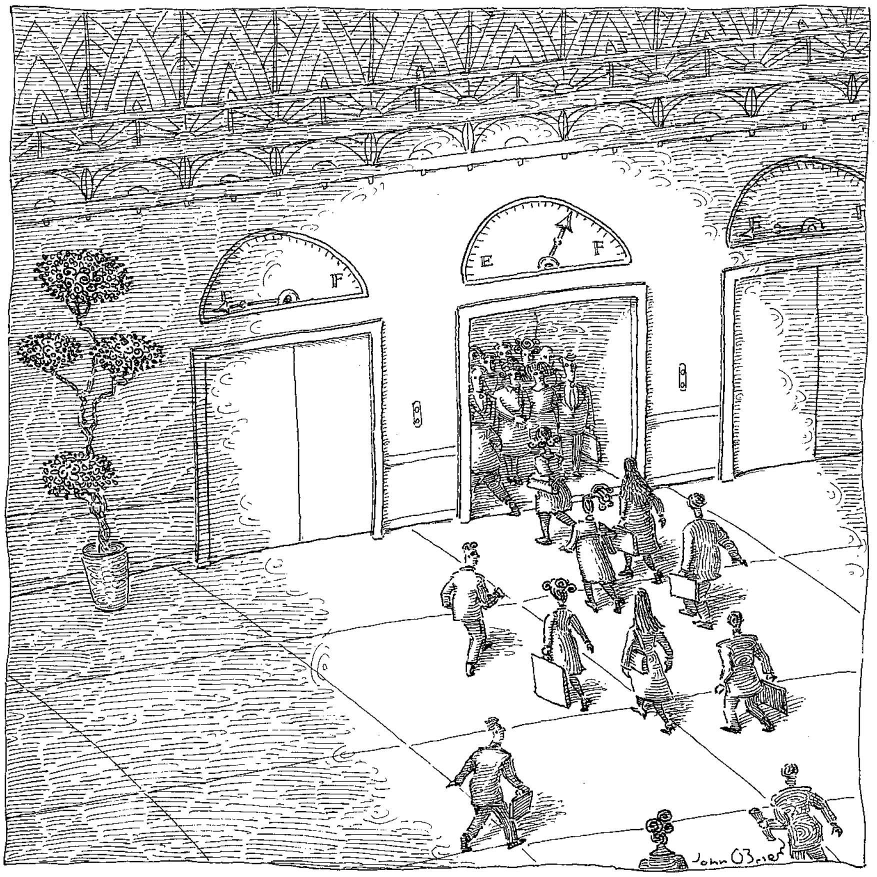
The large man became suddenly angry. "I see," he said menacingly, gritting his teeth. "I'm the one who's being judged? It's my fault, is it, I'm the one who's guilty?" He slapped Rezak with all his strength. "Where's your wife, you bastard? I know all about it. Nobody took her—you sold her down the road, you pimp, and now you'll tell me to whom and when and for how much." He walked to the opposite wall and back, then came up and looked closely into Rezak's face. "Or perhaps you killed her? She didn't have children? You bought a lemon? Ready for a new one, moneybags?"

He slapped Rezak again, cutting his lip. "You listen to me, I can make you fuck your own daughter if I want to, you'll hump her all night, like a dog fucking a bitch."

"For God's sake, for God's mercy, I don't have a daughter, sir . . ."

"You're really trying to piss me off, aren't you?" And then, to one of the men, "Take him down."

The two uniformed policemen lifted Rezak off the hook and threw



him to the ground. Rubbing his hands together, the big man looked down at Rezak appraisingly, as if considering his next move.

"Stretch him out and bring me the strap."

They pulled down his shalwar, carried him to a bench, and stretched him on it, one pulling his arms and one pulling his feet. They had removed his kurta when they hung him up on the wall.

The big man brandished what looked like the sole of an enormous shoe, with writing on one side in thick black script. "See what this says? It says, 'Sweetheart, where did you sleep last night?' Understand?"

Without warning, he swung.

Rezak shrieked, a startled high-pitched sound. He never had felt pain like this, which spread flickering all through his body.

Another policeman came into the room when Rezak screamed and stood by the door, watching, with a grin on his face.

"Come here," the big man said. "You do it, since you're so interested. You need the practice, anyway."

Of course, he could tell them nothing. "I don't know," he sobbed. "She's gone, I don't know anything." After a few strokes, he fell into a rhythm, shrieking when they hit him, then, when they stopped, groaning, "O my God, O my God, O my God . . ."

After beating Rezak for five or six minutes, they threw him into a storeroom.

The D.S.P. stopped at the Tret post on his way down to Islamabad from Murree. The big man stood up and casually saluted when the officer walked in. They shook hands.

"What's going on? Anything new?"

"Call from Awaz Khan Sahib. He keeps asking why we haven't picked up those two clowns from Mariani."

They discussed this, something to do with a road contractor, villagers blocking the line of a new road—they needed to be shown the stick.

As he started to leave, the D.S.P. asked, "What about that missing girl?"

"Someone driving by must have seen her and snatched her. The Chandias say they didn't do it."

Only the most powerful of the gangster clans in the area would have presumed to abduct a woman without cutting in the police.

"And we pulled in the husband and worked on him—he's clean."

The D.S.P. made a face. "You didn't! This is some American woman's pet servant. Tell me you didn't do anything severe."

"He's fine, he's fine. Do you want to see him?"

"No. You're positive, right?"

"I'm definitely positive."

"No marks?"

"Well, sir, no visible marks. I have to work somewhere."

The D.S.P. laughed. "I suppose you do."

After thinking for a moment, he said, "I'll have to go see Bukhari Sahib and explain that she's disappeared off the face of the earth. It's a good idea to put in an appearance there anyway."

"What about the old man?"

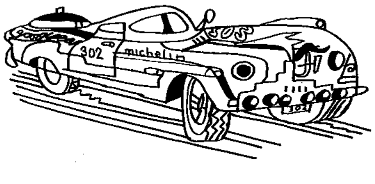
"Dump him at home and tell him he better keep his mouth shut."

Shortly before dawn, almost tenderly now, they bundled Rezak into the same unmarked car and sneaked him back into his hut.

"You've tasted it once. Don't make us dose you again. Not a word to anyone—do you understand?"

Rezak stared at his feet. Finally, he nodded his head.

He lay all that day without sleeping, into the dusk, then the dark. His buttocks had swollen up, puffy and white like bread dough, so that he had to lie on his stomach. His mind whirled, without touching on any one thing for more than a moment—the wife he married when almost still a boy, who died so many years ago, then his second wife, the little mentally disturbed girl. His stepbrothers, who took his land, the fruit trees in the garden there in Kashmir and the fruit trees here, brought from America. His things, his television, the day he went to the store and bought the bright-red plastic television.



"Why should I complain? The policemen did as they always do. The fault is mine, who married in old age, with one foot in the grave. God gave me so much more than I deserved, when I expected nothing at all."

He made sure to be perfectly silent about what had happened.

After he recovered, he was left with one last wish. In Rezak's mind, good fortune and grace were wound together, so that the Harouni family's connections and wealth established not simply the power of the household but also its virtue. Ghulam Rasool had served the Harounis for more than fifty years, some of the other retainers had served almost as long. He could never equal that service. But nevertheless the family took him in when otherwise he might have begged in the streets. They gave him the money to live beyond his station, they made him hope—for too much. And when he lost the girl their instruments punished him for having dared to reach so high, for owning something that would excite envy, that placed him in the way of beatings and the police. Now he belonged to the Harounis. This was how he understood justice.

He said to Ghulam Rasool, "I beg you, ask our master to bury me here on this land, in one corner, whichever one he likes."

This became his dream and his consolation. He lived on for another year, then six months more, collecting his salary, never spending a rupee more than was sufficient to keep his body warm. He sold the television, sold the goats. At the end of eighteen months, he went up to Murree, to the stonecutter, and said that he wanted the very best gravestone in the shop, and carved marble to sheathe the rest of the grave.

After his night in the police station, Rezak walked gingerly and made grunting noises under his breath—everyone remarked on how he had changed after his wife disappeared. The stonecutter, seeing his bent, trembling figure, thought, This old bird doesn't know what good marble costs.

But Rezak took out a roll of bills, tied in a greasy handkerchief that he pulled from under his shirt. Blue notes, thousands.

"Well that's different," the stonecutter said, taking Rezak's hand and leading him into the back room. "Look at this piece, now. Look at the color, the grain. Look at the size of that. I swear to God, I've been saving it for my own mother."

No one had seen the old man for several days, and the gardener sent to inquire rattled and knocked and then found him dead in the little cubicle. Ghulam Rasool had the gardeners dig a grave along the wall of the property, and that evening they buried him, just a few people attending the *janaza*—the servants from the big house, a few men from the bazaar and from houses on the hillside next to the Ali Khan lands. A poor woman from nearby had been paid to wash the body, the *maulvi* from the mosque in the bazaar said the prayer.

The next Friday, Sonya came up from Islamabad at nightfall, bringing just her young son and his ayah. Ghulam Rasool, dropping a pill of sweetener into a cup of tea, which she took in her room in front of a fire, said, "I beg your pardon, Begum Sahib. The old man Rezak, whom you so kindly put in charge at the Ali Khan lands, has passed away."

The electricity had failed, as it often did up on the mountain. At dusk, by candlelight, the tall rooms of the stone-built house were solemn and chilled, like an empty church or a school when the children are gone.

"Poor poor thing. All alone, and his wife disappeared."

At moments, as now, she felt closer to Ghulam Rasool than to anyone else in Pakistan, his large dark compassionate face, heavy body, his shrewd and yet ponderous manner, his orthodox unshakable beliefs.

He was silent for a moment, then continued, "Please forgive me, but I took the liberty of having him buried in the Ali Khan orchard. He had asked me to speak with you."

Still not touching her tea, looking up at him, as he stood with his hands crossed on his belly, she said gently, "I'm so glad you did, Ghulam Rasool. Of course, Mian Sahib and I would want that."

The old servant had come far by knowing the ways of his masters. Saying no more or less than this, he withdrew quietly, leaving Sonya musing by the fire on having done the right thing for a lonely old man, having done a little bit for the good.

The next morning, slipping out of the house, Sonya took Ghulam Rasool and a single gardener and walked up to the Ali Khan lands. The smallness of the grave surprised her, the mound decorated with tinsel in advance of her visit, the marble stones he had bought stacked beside it. Ghulam Rasool and the gardener said the *fatiyah*, holding their upturned palms in front of them and silently reciting a prayer, and Sonya stood also with her hands upturned and eyes closed, thinking first of the old man, a life drawn to a close with so little fanfare, and then of her own dead, her father and mother lying under the snow in a Wisconsin graveyard.

When they had finished, she walked around the garden, looking at the fruit trees, the leaves colored and falling as the autumn advanced.

"What would you have us do with this?" Ghulam Rasool asked, leading her to the cabin, which sprouted a television antenna and bouquets of crude plastic flowers, their petals thick as tongues, bought by Rezak soon after his marriage, nailed up along the roof one day, to please his wife's innocent heart. "The old man didn't want his family to have anything from him."

It seemed to her vividly alive, a motionless hirsute presence, the antenna, the flowers, the four massive legs, the pipe that drained the inside spittoon trailing into the grass as if drawing nourishment.

She told them to bring it to the big estate and park it in a shaded corner somewhere not too visible, as a memorial. Her husband, a raconteur, could show it to his guests and tell them about Rezak, the old man who entered service bringing his own house.

At first, the cabin sat inviolate below the swimming pool, locked, Rezak's things still in the cupboards and drawers. Sonya went once to look at it, then did not return, her attention fading. Gradually, like falling leaves, the locks were broken off, one person taking the thermos, another the wood tools—files and a hammer, a plane, a level. The clothes disappeared, the last cupboard emptied, even the filthy mattress pulled out and put to use, taken by the sweeper who cleaned the toilets in the big house. The door of the little cabin hung open, the wind and blown rain scoured it clean. ♦

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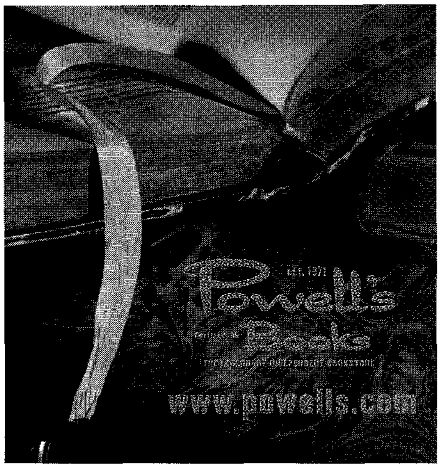

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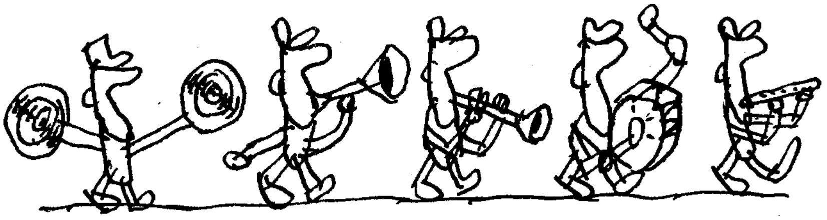


ON TELEVISION

CONVENTION WISDOM

Cable news at the gatherings of the clans.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

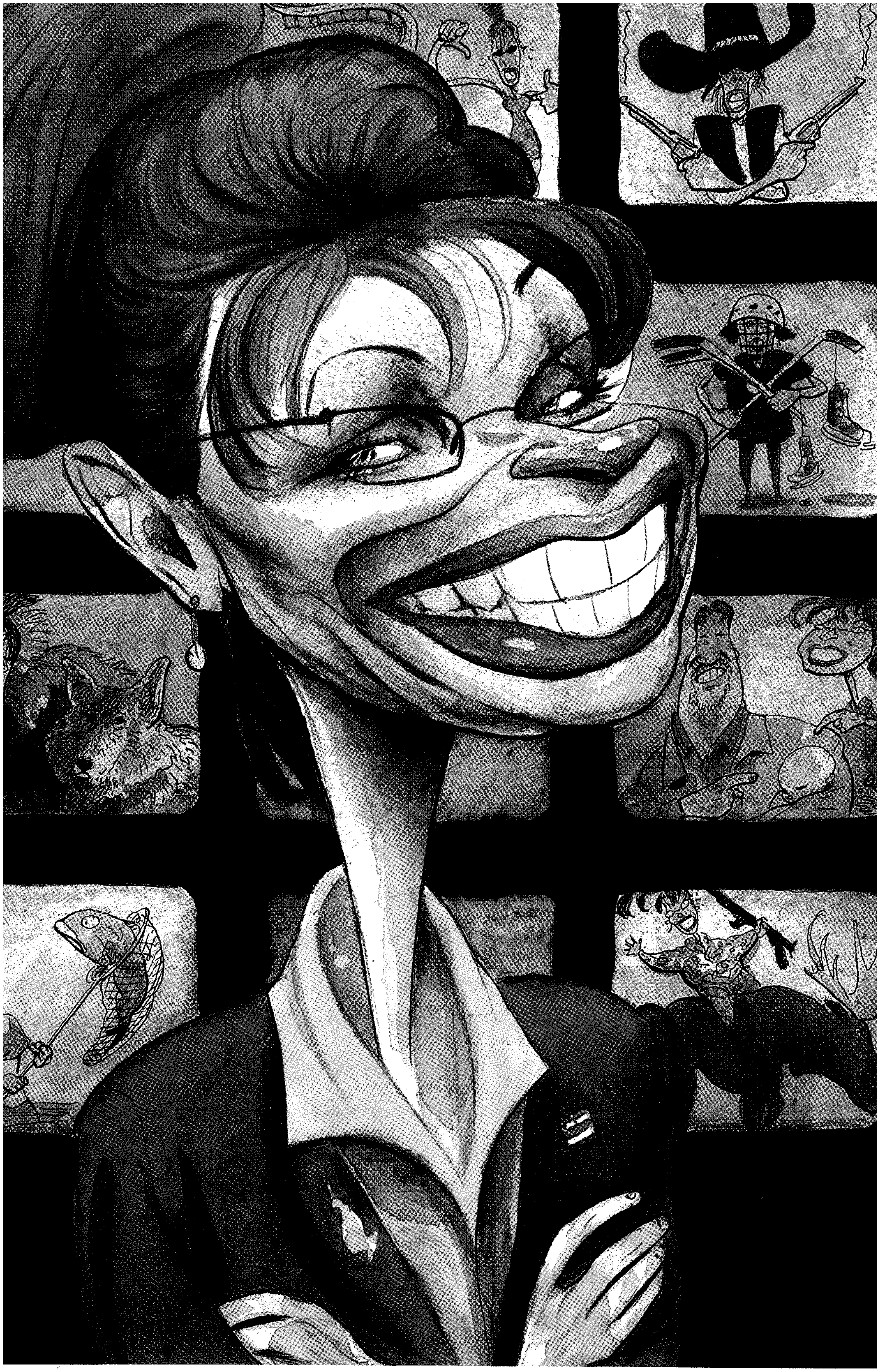
Barack who? Almost as soon as the Democratic National Convention was over, Barack Obama was consigned to the dustbin of the news cycle, swept into it with shocking dispatch by the scramble to cover Hurricane Gustav and another meteorological disturbance that developed out of the blue in Minnesota—Hurricane Sarah. Does anyone even remember what happened two weeks ago in . . . where was it, again? Detroit? Des Moines? Oh, right—Denver. There are moments in life—extremes of good or bad, danger or joy or confusion—that have the effect of blurring whatever came before, and this was one of them. After the Presidential campaign had been going on for nearly two years, now, all of a sudden, with two months to go until the general election, one of the four key players was someone whom most Americans (meaning about three hundred million) had never even heard of. Whatever one's politics, this was a fascinating—riveting—development, and, as Sarah Palin's story unfolded over the weekend before the Republican National Convention, culminating (for now) in the news that her seventeen-year-old daughter was pregnant, it was hard not to feel more and more disoriented. The proceedings of the Democratic Convention had made sense; the average human brain could process them. The Republican Convention caused a lot of people to feel as if they'd woken up in a dark room in a strange house and couldn't find the light switch.

This sense of disorientation was reinforced by the way the Conventions were covered on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News—the Larry, Curly, and Moe of TV news. On MSNBC in particular, the element of slapstick was evident; there were a couple of onscreen tussles between colleagues, and of course such highlights immediately went zipping around the Web, collected with glee and amazement, like valuable baseball cards. These incidents can be overlooked, up to a point; they're political entertainment, the legacy of the "Point/Counterpoint" segment of "60 Minutes" and of "Crossfire," in which liberals and conservatives talked at each other, for no one's edification. (See Fox News's "Hannity & Colmes" for a contemporary example, if you must.) But sometimes when you watch Chris Matthews, Keith Olbermann, and Joe Scarborough, who get jumpy and cranky in each other's presence, you think these guys are going to burn the house down. (Here's where I mention that a member of my family works at NBC News.) In the political season, when the teams from NBC's network-news operation and MSNBC work together, the difference between the class acts and the class clowns is striking. Tom Brokaw, Andrea Mitchell, and Brian Williams try to keep the NBC news tent from blowing away, while Matthews & Co. are sawing through the support poles and cutting the ropes.

During the Democratic Convention, Scarborough claimed that the McCain campaign was on the upswing, and Olbermann muttered, "Jesus, Joe, why don't you get a shovel," which I guess meant that he was proposing a more efficient method of piling up waste products. A back-and-forth ensued, in which the two freely exchanged ideas about who was shovelling more. The next day, Scarborough, on his show, "Morning Joe," responding to the news that the Iraqi Prime Minister wanted American troops out of the country by the end of 2011, went on a tirade, saying, in his characteristically sarcastic tone, "All right. We'll do that. Hey, I'll tell you what, Nouri. If you'd like us to leave now, we could. Of course, the Sunnis will have your head—you'll look like Mussolini in a public square in Italy in about fifteen minutes. But we'll leave now if you'd like. We don't give a damn, it's your neck, not ours." After more of this pugnacity, David Shuster, a regular on the show, said that Scarborough should suggest that in a serious way to the McCain people, since they ridicule anyone who proposes it. Scarborough then attacked Shuster, mocking him for claiming to be politically independent, calling him Rip Van Shuster for not having paid enough attention over the past few months to where Scarborough actually stood on the issue of troop withdrawal, and accusing him of picking a fight. After seven long minutes of this, David Gregory, reporting from the safety of the Pepsi Center, jokingly and wisely said to Scarborough that his earpiece hadn't been working and he hadn't heard any of it. This is the kind of thing the grownups at NBC are forced to do more and more, and I'll bet they're getting mighty tired of it. There is, I feel funny admitting, a certain salty chemistry on "Morning Joe" between Scarborough and his coffeemates Mika Brzezinski (daughter of Zbigniew) and Willie Geist (son of Bill Geist, the CBS correspondent). Brzezinski will encourage Scarborough in his antics, laughing as he goes over the top, then suddenly scold him, and make a big show of looking embarrassed for the camera. Geist laconically interjects comments that run from the mature to the obnoxious. It's a weird, completely unnecessary show, and it's appallingly entertaining.

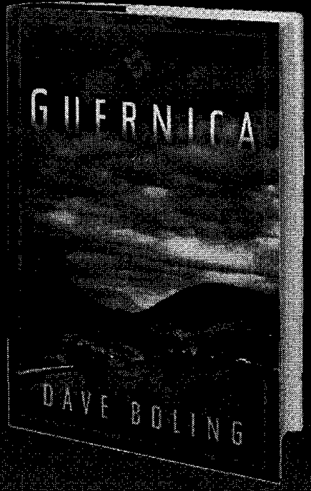
More damaging to the common weal than internecine brawling is the sheer amount of pontificating ("America loves a winner," "America loves the underdog") and prognosticating and chest puffing that is engaged in by the cast of dubious characters who are given a forum on cable-news programs and run around from network to network like free-range chickens. James Carville, the Democratic noise-

ABOVE: BENOÎT JACQUES; OPPOSITE: STEVE BRODNER



thirty-seven million people watched Governor Sarah Palin's speech at the Republican Convention last week.

AN EXTRAORDINARY EPIC OF LOVE AND FAMILY SET IN THE BASQUE TOWN OF GUERNICA DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR



"*Guernica* is an ambitious debut by a writer whose daring imagination and seamless prose transport us to an extraordinary time and place." —**Jim Lynch, author of *The Highest Tide***

"Ambitious...A moving tale of courage and resilience...A crucial reminder that genocidal folly is never as far away from us as we might wish."
—***Kirkus Reviews***

"Boling's portrait of the Guernica tragedy is vivid, as is his illustration of the Basque people's oppression...Skillful with characters and dialogue, possessing a great sense of timing and humor."
—***Publishers Weekly***

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maker, produced his usual litany of value-subtracted metaphors. (He had, for instance, Hillary Clinton setting the table for Obama, and Bill adding the flowers.) And Fox News had a tasty twofer the day of the former President's speech—Dick Morris in the studio and Karl Rove in a not-nearly-remote-enough location talking about what Clinton should say. (Morris, usefully, told an anecdote about how Hillary had "screamed" at him when he told her that she should wear earth tones.) What are the networks trying to do by giving Rove, Morris, Bill Bennett, the unilluminating Carville, and others a regular outlet? It's impossible for an uncynical viewer ever to know how much of what they say is partisan spin, careerist spin, payback, or good sense. David Gergen is a slightly different case; he's been a consultant to Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Clinton, so at least you can be sure that what he's selling is David Gergen. Fox News has to be cited for wicked cleverness in some of its coverage of the Democratic Convention. In order to fill viewers in on the Party's electoral history, the network had interviews with Geraldine Ferraro, George McGovern, and Michael Dukakis. Fair and balanced and very interesting it all was, while also serving as a sweet reminder to Fox viewers of three of the Republicans' greatest triumphs of the past thirty-six years. Nevertheless, these are people who knew what they were talking about, and, more important, viewers knew where they were coming from. They're politicians.

It was refreshing and nourishing to hear the perspective of Tom Brokaw, whose twenty-first and twenty-second Conventions these were, as MSNBC promos reminded us, and whose years as a reporter gave him the ability and the authority to comment on the proceedings. Of course, Brokaw had the luxury, this time around, of not being on the air very much, and of not being truly in the thick of things. So maybe the thick of things needs to be thinned a little. When the broadcast networks started cutting down on Convention coverage, it was seen by some as an occasion to criticize TV for what it had supposedly done to the American mind and for the way it had corrupted our sense of what was important. But the more extensive coverage on cable-news channels hasn't brought much in the way of real gains, partly because the Conventions themselves have so few surprises. The Republican Convention did have a biggie this year, causing an astonishing (and astonished) thirty-seven million people to watch Palin's speech last week—but the blanket coverage didn't leave viewers any better informed. (Reporters' jobs weren't made easier by the fact that Palin was kept out of sight until the day of her speech.) Before Palin's big night, one prophesier, predicting the tenor of the evening to come, said to Andrea Mitchell, "I don't think you'll see her going after Obama. I think that's a little hard given that she's so new on to the scene." The knowledgeable fellow was Mark Whitaker, the new NBC News Washington bureau chief. It's all right to be wrong, but it's better to say you don't know if, indeed, you don't know. Best of all, find a better use of airtime. Information—even when it comes in small packets—can tell you more than a hundred pregame analyses, such as John King's reporting during the Democratic Convention that Obama's camp had decided not to print signs with Bill Clinton's name for conventioneers to wave around when he spoke, because it was felt that he hadn't earned that privilege.

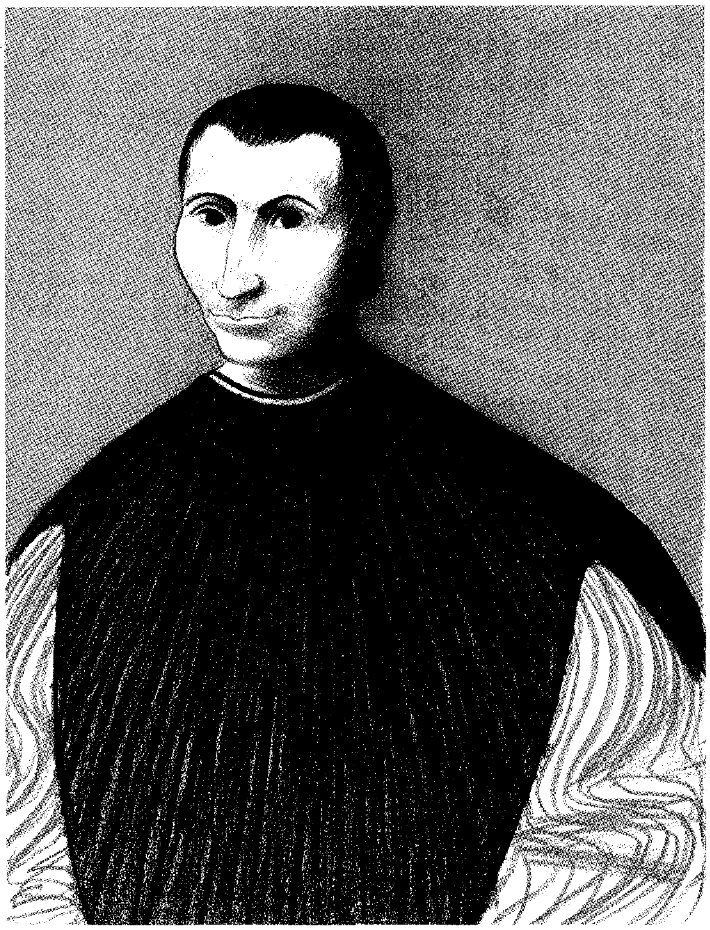
One is torn between thinking that less cable coverage (and perhaps more network coverage) is the way to go and the desire not to miss a moment. The Conventions are important, and, more than that, they're priceless. Who would want to miss the spectacle of Sarah Palin's small-hearted, nasty performance in her national—and international—début? Or Rudy Giuliani, smiling like a madman several days in a row for no reason at all? Or Teddy Kennedy's moving appearance, Beau Biden's utterly winning tribute to his father, and the serendipity of the camera's capturing the precious moment when the seven-year-old Piper Palin licked her hand and tenderly, maternally smoothed her baby brother's hair? But there's a responsible middle ground, which at the moment is occupied only by PBS, with its low-key coverage and lack of self-promotion. At the end of the Republican Convention, the MSNBC anchors tried to talk to Andrea Mitchell, who was down on the floor, almost buried in a sea of red, white, and blue balloons. It was the biggest balloon drop she'd ever seen, she said. She was stuck in the middle of the pile, and she could barely see over the top of it. We sort of knew how she felt. ♦

A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE FLORENTINE

The man who taught rulers how to rule.

BY CLAUDIA ROTH PIERPONT



Machiavelli believed that to succeed in life a man must be adaptable.

LORENZO MATTOTTI

One method of torture used in Florentine jails during the glorious days of the Renaissance was the *strappado:* a prisoner was hoisted into the air by a rope attached to his wrists, which had been tied behind his back, and then suddenly dropped toward the floor as many times as it took to get him to confess. Since the procedure usually dislocated the shoulders, tore the muscles, and rendered one or both arms useless, it is remarkable that Niccolò Machiavelli, after reportedly undergoing six such "drops," asked for pen and paper and began to write. Machiavelli had nothing to confess. Although his name had been found on an incriminating list, he had played no part in a failed conspiracy to murder the city's newly restored Medici rulers. (Some said that it was Giuliano de' Medici who had been targeted, others that it was his brother Cardinal Giovanni.) He had been imprisoned for almost two weeks when, in February, 1513, in a desperate bid for pardon, he wrote a pair of sonnets addressed to the "Magnificent Giuliano," mixing pathos with audacity and apparently inextinguishable wit. "I have on my legs, Giuliano, a pair of shackles," he began, and went on to report that the lice on the walls of his cell were as big as butterflies, and that the noise of keys and padlocks boomed around him like Jove's thunderbolts. Perhaps worried that the poems would not impress, he announced that the muse he had summoned had hit him in the face rather than render her services to a man who was chained up like a lunatic. To the heir of a family that prided itself on its artistic patronage, he submitted the outraged complaint "This is the way poets are treated!"

Machiavelli was not especially known for his poetry, and few would have called him a man with a claim to Medici support. His family was distinguished but far from rich, and had definite republican associations. Two of his father's cousins had been beheaded for their opposition to the dynasty's founder, Cosimo de' Medici, who had effectively brought the historic republic to an end, in 1434, the better to protect the family bank's enormous fortune. During Machiavelli's youth, his father seems to have gained him entrée to the scholarly circles around the widely beloved Lorenzo de' Medici, who had managed to rule Florence for decades without the Florentines' feeling the brunt or shame of being ruled. But Lorenzo had died in 1492, and, two years later, the Medici were thrown out of the city. Machiavelli was twenty-five; Giuliano de' Medici, Lorenzo's youngest son, was fifteen. While Machiavelli had nothing to do with the religious regime of the Dominican preacher Savonarola, who replaced the Medici—he disdained the preacher's pious "lies" even while admiring his republican reforms—he came into his own once the city turned against its savior and Savonarola (after suffering fourteen drops of the *strappado*) was hanged. In 1498, when both God and Savonarola's supporters lost their government posts, Machiavelli found himself with a job. For the next fourteen years, he proudly served an independent city-state that had returned to its republican form, but was now carefully buttressed to withstand Medici forces lurking at its borders, or the threat that other wealthy families might pose. The chief safeguard of the city's liberty was the Great Council: an administrative body with a membership of more than three thousand citizens, which gave Florence, with a population of some fifty thousand, the most broadly representative government of its time.

At the age of twenty-nine, Machiavelli was appointed Second Chancellor, with responsibilities for the city's correspondence and domestic reports. His immense physical and intellectual energy (he casually boasted of making "Greek, Latin, Hebraic, and Chaldean" references) seems to account for his additional appointment, within a month, as Secretary of the so-called Ten of War, which sent him on remote diplomatic missions, usually in the face of impending crisis. War was never far off. These were years when France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, battling over rival claims, sent their formidable armies marching across the weak and continually sparring Italian states; Milan, Genoa, Florence, Venice, Naples, and any number of smaller duchies, marquisates, and republics found it hard to defend themselves, for lack of a united front.

To make matters worse, the varied Italian powers relied on mercenary troops that traded sides more easily than today's big-league ballplayers, signing a new contract as soon as a better offer came along. Machiavelli thrived on the urgency and the uproar, filling his saddlebags with books and galloping off to argue the Florentine case, then report back on what he had found. In one report, he described his duties as weighing what the ruler's "intentions are, what he really wants, which way his mind is turning, and what might make him move ahead or draw back"; he wrote of the need "to conjecture the future through negotiations and incidents." All in all, it seems that he was expected to bring the gifts of a psychologist to the task of a prophet.

He did it very well. Although his lack of wealth kept him from achieving the rank of ambassador—officially a mere envoy, he styled himself, rather grandly, the Florentine Secretary—his unblinking judgments made him the right-hand man of the republic's chief official, Piero Soderini. He was set to work at the courts of King Louis XII of France, Pope Julius II, and the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, all the while studying the differing forms of government and temperament offered to his view. Like most psychologists, Machiavelli was insatiably curious about the human mind. And no one he met impressed him more than Cesare Borgia, the son of the Spanish Pope Alexander VI, who was at the height of his power when, in 1502, he received Machiavelli in the ducal palace of Urbino—by candlelight, as legend has it, dressed all in black, already a figure of self-consciously theatrical menace. Borgia had recently conquered Urbino, along with a large swath of central Italy, by means of daring, speed, and treachery. (Machiavelli especially admired a maneuver in which Borgia had asked the Duke of Urbino to lend him his artillery to help take a nearby town, then turned on the undefended duchy and took it instead.) Machiavelli could not help but contrast Borgia's stunning effectiveness with the frustratingly slow and prudent Florentine republic, which displayed the deficiencies as well as the virtues of the need for popular consensus, and he wrote excitedly to his bosses in the Palazzo della Signoria of the lessons offered by this majestic enemy. In the ruthless young warrior he saw a potential hero: a leader strong enough to expel the foreign armies and transform Italy from a poetic entity into a real one.

"We spent the summer on the Côte de Jersey."

The most practical lesson that the dazzled envoy took from Borgia was the deployment of a citizen army. At one point in his campaigns, after his hired mercenaries had conspired against him, Borgia had been forced to draft peasants from his conquered territories. Machiavelli recognized the advantages of such a system, which were made particularly clear when Florence's mercenary army, warring against Pisa, ignominiously turned and fled once the fighting got too rough. Who, after all, was willing to die for a handful of florins (particularly the meagre handful paid by the republic)? On the other hand, who was not willing to die for one's country? In 1505, Machiavelli argued the case for a Florentine citizen militia, and on a brisk February day in 1506 several hundred Tuscan farmers paraded through the Piazza della Signoria, snappily dressed in red-and-white trousers and white caps. Despite the commedia-dell'arte air, just three years later Machiavelli led a thousand citizen troops in the latest of fifteen years of attacks on Pisa, and—to general astonishment—the Florentines won.

Machiavelli's military reputation remained sterling until 1512, when the militia, defending the neighboring town of Prato from Spanish troops, broke ranks and ran as shamelessly as the most craven mercenaries. Worse, the defeat left Florence on the losing side of a wider battle between France and the allied forces of Spain and Pope Julius II. With Florence vulnerable, a long-resentful pro-Medici faction seized its chance, and the republican government was overthrown. And so it happened that in September, 1512, after an absence of eighteen years, the Medici rode back into the city. Within days, Machiavelli's militia and the Great Council were dismissed.

Although Machiavelli soon lost his position as Secretary, he seems to have believed that he maintained some authority, writing a formal plea on behalf of Piero Soderini, whom he had helped to escape on the eve of the Medici return. This exceptional document—published for the first time in English, as "A Caution to the Medici," in "The Essential Writings of Machiavelli" (edited and translated by Peter Constantine; Modern Library; $17.95)—presents an argument against the Medici faction's continued blackening of Soderini's name. Machiavelli offers a political rationale ("The Medici government would only weaken itself by attacking a man who is in exile and cannot harm it") for what seems an attempt to defend a friend and, in his name, the Florentine people. Of course, any illusions of influence were dispelled a few months later, in February, 1513, by jail and the *strappado*. Whether Giuliano de' Medici ever read the sonnets that Machiavelli dedicated to him is a matter of dispute, but his intervention was not ultimately required. After a month behind bars, Machiavelli was released, thanks to an amnesty granted upon Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici's election to the papacy as Leo X, the first Medici pope. ("God has granted us the papacy," he reportedly told Giuliano. "Let us enjoy it.") For four days, Florence was alight with pride and the heady prospect of favors from the overflowing papal coffers: fireworks, bonfires, pealing bells, and cannonades all greeted the weary former Secretary as he made his way home.

Even now, Machiavelli hoped that "these new masters of ours" would find his services of use. He was experienced, he was (at forty-three) extremely vigorous, and during his many years of civil service he had shown himself a trustworthy man. "My poverty is evidence of my fidelity and virtue," he confided to a friend. And he desperately needed a job. That spring, still unemployed, he retreated from the city to live with his wife and children on the family farm, near San Casciano, in taunting view of the tower of the Palazzo della Signoria. It was a sprawling and ramshackle place, and he was sadly out of his element, catching birds and playing cards; his worldly friends sent mocking regards to the chickens. But in the evening, approaching his study, he stripped off his muddy clothes and put on his ambassadorial attire. "Fitted out appropriately, I step inside the venerable courts of the ancients," he wrote, in one of the most famous letters of the Renaissance, "where I am unashamed to converse with them and to question them about the motives for their actions, and they, out of their human kindness, answer me." Livy, Cicero, Virgil, Tacitus: he wrote their answers down and, adding observations from the history he had witnessed, toward the end of 1513 he completed a little book about statecraft—a book of strictly practical matters, dealing with armies and fortresses, with ways of holding on to power—that he resolved would demonstrate his usefulness once and for all to Giuliano, since it discussed people and their actions "as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined." Never before or since has a writer so clearly proved that the truth is a dangerous thing.

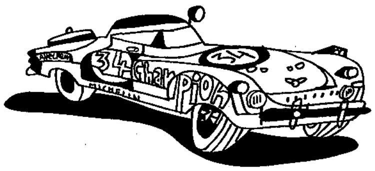
"The Prince," Machiavelli's how-to guide for sovereigns, turned out to be "a scandal that Western political thought and practice has been gazing at in horror and in fascination since its first publication," to quote from Albert Russell Ascoli's introduction to Peter Constantine's new translation (Modern Library; $8; also included in "The Essential Writings of Machiavelli"). Circulated in manuscript for years, the book was not published until 1532—nearly five years after Machiavelli's death—and received its first significant critique within the decade, from an English cardinal who pronounced the author "an enemy of the human race." Machiavelli stood accused of having inspired Henry VIII to defy papal authority and seize ecclesiastical power for the crown. Some thirty years later, in France, the book was blamed for inciting Queen Catherine de' Medici to order the massacre of two thousand rebel Protestants. (There seems to have been little besides her family connection to warrant the Machiavellian association.) His notoriety grew, less through knowledge of the offending book than through the many lurid and often skewed attacks it prompted, with titles on the order of "Stratagems of Satan." Wherever a sovereign usurped power from the church or the nobility, whenever ostentatious deceit or murderous force was used, Machiavelli was spied in the shadows, scribbling at his desk amid the olive groves, his quill dipped in a poison so potent that it threatened the power structures of Europe.

What caused the furor? Here, out of context and placed end to end (a method not unfamiliar to his attackers), are some of Machiavelli's most salient and satanic points: "A prince, particularly a new prince, cannot afford to cultivate attributes for which men are considered good. In order to maintain the state, a prince will often be compelled to work against what is merciful, loyal, humane, upright, and scrupulous"; "A wise ruler cannot and should not keep his word when it would be to his disadvantage"; "Men must be either flattered or eliminated, because a man will readily avenge a slight grievance, but not one that is truly severe"; "A man is quicker to forget the death of his father than the loss of his patrimony." And, the distilled spirit of this dark brew: "How one lives and how one ought to live are so far apart that he who spurns what is actually done for what ought to be done will achieve ruin rather than his own preservation." To underscore how shocking such notions were, they should be compared with other examples from the genre in which Machiavelli was consciously working: the "Mirrors of Princes," a type of professional primer offered by advisers to young or recently elevated monarchs, meant to shape their judgment and, with it, the future of the state. A philosopher could not hope for a more direct influence on the fate of mankind than by writing such a book; or, practically speaking, for a better advertisement for a royal job. Erasmus, whose "Education of a Christian Prince" was written two years after Machiavelli's work—he presented his treatise first to Charles of Aragon and, after it failed to elicit the desired financial result, to Henry VIII—spun his pious counsel around the central thesis "What must be implanted deeply and before all else in the mind of the prince is the best possible understanding of Christ." Machiavelli, on the other hand, proposed the best possible understanding of the methods of Cesare Borgia.

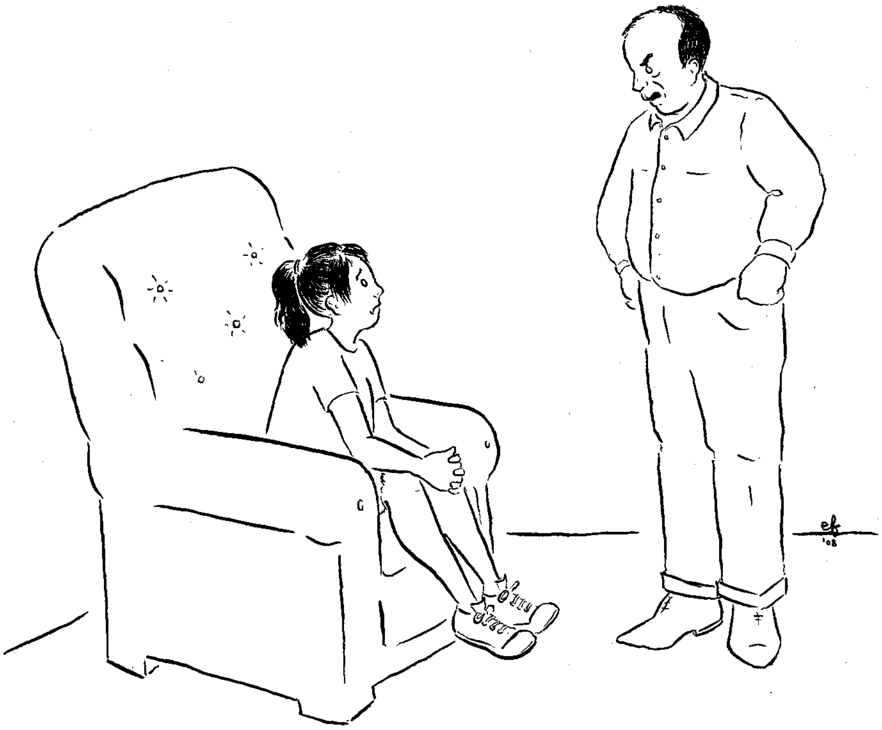
There is a context, however, that, if not ameliorating, is richly complicating and easily overlooked in the light of Machiavelli's aphoristic skill. One doesn't wish to fall back on the excuse that this is the way that rulers (or other people) often behave, although it is true that Machiavelli no more invented political evil by describing it than Kinsey invented sex. Like all the celebrated artists of his time and place—and statecraft was one of the Renaissance arts—Machiavelli was in thrall to ancient pagan models. But there is a crucial difference: a painter could situate a Madonna within a classical portico without disturbing the figure's Christian meaning. Works that delve beneath the surface of classical forms to get at classical thinking—works of literature, philosophy, politics—require a recognition, at least, of the conflict between pagan and Christian ideals: strength versus humility, earthly life versus the hereafter, the hero versus the saint. For Machiavelli, the choice was not difficult. The Roman republic was for him the undisputed golden age; even before writing "The Prince," he had begun a commentary on Livy's "History of Rome," closely analyzing the Roman system of liberty and leaving no doubt that he was a republican at heart. ("It is not the particular good but the common good that makes cities great. And without doubt this common good is observed nowhere but in a republic.") But Christian piety had sapped the strength needed to bring this heroic form of government back to life. The great republic of his own era had failed because the men entrusted with its liberties did not know how to fight for them. He had seen his friend Soderini forfeit Florence by refusing to limit the freedoms ultimately employed against him by his enemies; that is, by trusting that goodness and decency could triumph over the implacable vices and envious designs of men.

This was not Borgia's defect. Yet he was not a monster, if one considered the question of morals honestly, in terms of the good actually accomplished rather than the reputation created for oneself. Unafraid of being known for cruelty, Borgia had deposed a number of petty rulers who were so weak that robbery and murder had been rampant in their lands, until—"with a few exemplary executions"—he established peace and order. Machiavelli asserts that Borgia had thus proved more genuinely merciful than the Florentines, who, guarding their reputation, had allowed the town of Pistoia to be destroyed by factional fighting rather than intervene with their own arms. "A prince, therefore, must not fear being reproached for cruelty," he concludes, issuing one of the memorably black-hearted maxims that do not mean exactly what they say. (On the question of murdering a few to save a greater number, Thomas More took a similar position in "Utopia," which followed "The Prince" by just three years and, giving its name to the very notion of political idealism, has stood in moral counterpoint ever since.) For Machiavelli, cruel and unusual measures were to be used only out of necessity, to be ended quickly, and to be converted into benefits (safety, security, wealth) for the prince's subjects. Rulers who perpetrated needless or excessive cruelties—such as King Ferdinand of Spain, who had robbed his country's Christianized Jews and Moors, and then expelled them—are rebuked, no matter what their achievements may have been. "These means can lead to power," Machiavelli confirms, and then departs from his famous counsel of Realpolitik to add, "but not glory."

So is he in fact a moralist? Or, heaven forbid, a saint? Machiavelli was a very precise writer, continually reworking his manuscripts to achieve a style that is as clear as daylight. Writing in his native Tuscan-inflected Italian (rather than in the scholarly Latin commonly used for significant works), he relied on simple words and expressions, proud of his freedom from the "unnecessary artifice with which so many writers gild their work." One of the conundrums that Machiavelli poses for his readers is that this verbal clarity lends itself to such uncertain meaning. Peter Constantine, who has won many awards for his staggeringly multilingual work in translating Chekhov, Thomas Mann, Voltaire, and Sophocles (among others), has translated "The Prince" with the stated intention of winning its author the status of "a major stylist, a writer of beautiful prose." True, "major stylist" is rarely one's first thought when Machiavelli comes up in conversation. And when a book has been translated as often as "The Prince"—there are more than half a dozen English translations currently in print—some new claim is expected. Yet, on careful comparison, the most stylistically elegant version of "The Prince" remains George Bull's nearly fifty-year-old translation, a taut and almost Hemingwayesque account of Machiavelli's strong republican prose. (Sample evidence: Constantine renders one of Machiavelli's famous sentences, "Since a prince must know how to use the nature of the beast to his advantage, he must emulate both the fox and the lion, because a lion cannot defy a snare, while a fox cannot defy a pack of wolves." Defy a snare? Bull's less wordy version is smoother English and also better mimics the punch of Machiavelli's Italian: "So, as a prince is forced to know how to act like a beast, he must learn from the fox and the lion; because the lion is defenceless against traps and a fox is defenceless against wolves.")



A translator's work is meant to be transparent, providing access to a text without agenda or interpretation. But the choice even of a word can amplify a thought in a significant way. Constantine may not provide the most nimbly literary Machiavelli, but he pushes us in the right political direction when, early in "The Prince," he offers: "Even with the most powerful army, if you want to invade a state, you need the support of the people." No other version of this line is quite as democratically ringing, not even Machiavelli's, which states that the success of an invasion depends on the *favore de' provinciali*, a phrase rendered by Bull as "the goodwill of the inhabitants" and by other translators in more or less the same comparatively pedestrian way. The support of the people: this idea or a near variant—"*el popolo amico*," "*la benivolenzia populare*"—occurs throughout Machiavelli's little book and slowly gathers weight as the one possession that the prince cannot afford to be without. Constantine is right to underscore it. The following observations—which could never pass as "Machiavellian"—should be viewed against the author's more famously glittering advice: "A prince must have the people on his side, otherwise he will not have support in adverse times"; "A prince need not worry unduly about conspiracies when the people are well disposed toward him. But if they are his enemies and hate him, he must fear everything and everybody." And the forthright climax of this theme: "The best fortress for the prince is to be loved by his people." Presented as no more than another component of the book's message of self-serving Realpolitik, Machiavelli's steady drumming of the lesson that the prince must treat his subjects well has an almost subliminal force. Whether the prince turns out to be a lion or a fox, "The Prince" sets a trap to render him, in relation to his people, a lamb.



"I'm not disappointed—I'm just very, very mad."

Machiavelli is often credited with the phrase "The end justifies the means." Although he never used exactly these words, and the notion appears to date from Greek tragedy, the implied moral relativism is essential to his work. Insofar as "The Prince" was intended as a means to an end, however, it was a failure: there is no evidence that Giuliano de' Medici ever read it, and the Florentine successor to whom Machiavelli eventually dedicated the book, Giuliano's despotic nephew Lorenzo, was said to have preferred the gift of a pair of hounds. In any case, neither prince saw fit to offer the author a job. Within the plan of the book itself, the final chapter envisions an end so important—the unification of the Italian states—that it justifies not only whatever means must be used to attain it but whatever language must be used to describe it. The prose suddenly becomes effusive, lyrical, and determinedly rousing: the verbal equivalent of pennants flying, trumpets sounding. For Machiavelli is no longer justifying or advising but actively urging the prince toward a goal, and it is a goal much larger than personal power. "Italy, after so many years, must welcome its liberator," he declares. "The love with which these lands that have suffered a flood of foreign armies will receive him will be boundless, as will be their thirst for vengeance, iron loyalty, their devotion and tears. All doors will be flung open. What populace would not embrace such a leader?" Judged as a means to this end, too, "The Prince" was a failure: it was three hundred and fifty years before Machiavelli's nationalist hopes prevailed. Still, he understood that many of his ideas, being so radically new, would meet resistance. Living in the age of great explorers—his assistant in the Florentine Chancery was Agostino Vespucci, cousin of Amerigo—Machiavelli saw himself as one of their company, with a mission "no less dangerous" than seeking "unknown seas and continents."

To the culture at large, the danger was real. "The Prince" offered the first major secular shock to the Christianized state in which we still live. Long before Darwin, Machiavelli showed us a credible world without Heaven or Hell, a world of "is" rather than "should be," in which men were coolly viewed as related to beasts and earthly government was the only hope of bettering our natural plight. Although his ideas have drawn sporadic support throughout history—among seventeenth-century English anti-monarchists, among nineteenth-century German nationalists—it was not until the present age that scholars began to separate the man from his cursed reputation. Roberto Ridolfi's landmark biography, of 1954, made a passionate case for its subject's Italian warmth of spirit. Leo Strauss, a few years later, claimed that Machiavelli intended his most outrageous statements merely to startle and amuse. And, in full redemption, Sebastian de Grazia's Pulitzer Prize-winning "Machiavelli in Hell," of 1989, argued for the quondam devil's stature as a profoundly Christian thinker. There is today an entire school of political philosophers who see Machiavelli as an intellectual freedom fighter, a transmitter of models of liberty from the ancient to the modern world. Yet what is most astonishing about our age is not the experts' desire to correct our view of a maligned historical figure but what we have made of that figure in his most titillatingly debased form. "The Mafia Manager: A Guide to the Corporate Machiavelli"; "The Princessa: Machiavelli for Women"; and the deliciously titled "What Would Machiavelli Do? The Ends Justify the Meanness" represent just a fraction of a contemporary, best-selling literary genre. Machiavelli may not have been, in fact, a Machiavellian. But in American business and social circles he has come to stand for the principle that winning—no matter how—is all. And for this alone, for the first time in history, he is a cultural hero.

"After everything was lost" is the way that Machiavelli referred to the years after he emerged from prison, failed to regain his job, and languished outside the halls of power. But even while he lamented his fate, and continued to angle for Medici favor, he went on writing, almost feverishly, and in a variety of forms. He completed his "Discourses on the First Decade of Livy," a scholarly ode to the republican ideal—John Adams loved this book—which he seems to have read aloud to friends in the increasingly anti-Medici circle that gathered in the gardens of the Rucellai palace. He devoted himself to poetry, working on classical themes in Dantesque terza rima, and he discovered a gift for the theatre. Most striking, in the midst of these dark years, he turned to comedy. There was the one about the devil who was afraid of his wife; the one he adapted from the Roman playwright Terence; and then there was "The Mandrake," a satiric, bawdy, often scatological farce involving the timeless trio of aspiring lover, stupid husband, and venal priest, all conspiring to get a Renaissance Sophia Loren into bed. It was the greatest hit of Machiavelli's career. Although the date of composition is uncertain—the observation that "here in Florence, if you're not in with the ruling party . . . you can't even get a dog to bark at you" describes a long-term quandary—we know that the play was first put on in 1520, in a production so successful that Pope Leo X ordered a command performance at the papal court later that year. And so, seven years after everything was lost, and thanks to the Pope's delight in a show that happily trafficked in adultery and the shifty morals of the clergy—this in the same year that Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther—Machiavelli at last came into Medici favor, and everything was more or less regained.

To succeed in life a man must be adaptable. This is a prime lesson of "The Prince," and Machiavelli appears to have been determined to live by it. A republican during the republic, a royal servant when princes rule: "He who conforms his course of action to the quality of the times will fare well." From Leo X and his cousin Giulio de' Medici—the Archbishop of Florence and its de-facto ruler since the death of the despised Lorenzo—Machiavelli now received a commission to write an official "History of Florence," an assignment that placed him in distinguished literary company, and carried the suggestion of other plum tasks to come. But a corollary, if contradictory, lesson of "The Prince" is that, try as he might, "man cannot deviate from that to which nature inclines him." In composing his Medici-commissioned history, Machiavelli agonized over how to present the Medici, and the result is anything but the work of a courtier. Recounting how the family's desire to "wield exclusive power" had led it to crush all political opposition, leaving other parties with no alternative except plots and murderous conspiracies, he concluded bluntly that under the Medici regime "liberty was unknown in Florence."

In the matter of conspiracies, in 1522 a plot to murder Giulio de' Medici was found to have originated among the learned circle of the Rucellai palace gardens. The circle was disbanded; Machiavelli's closest friends were exiled or beheaded. He, however—in circumstances very different from the Medici conspiracy a decade earlier—was neither arrested nor implicated. Scholars have agreed with the Florentine authorities that Machiavelli knew nothing of the plot; he was too historically suspect a figure for his friends to risk including. But Ross King, in his brief biography "Machiavelli: Philosopher of Power," points out how curiously often Machiavelli writes about political conspiracy, and the overt sympathy with which he handles the conspirators; in the portion of the "History" that Machiavelli was composing in 1522, he treats the fifteenth-century ringleader of a plot against the Sforza tyrant of Milan with the respect due to a Roman republican hero. It is difficult not to wonder, at least, about Machiavelli's innocence in these events. Of course, in 1522 there was not a scrap of evidence against him. But then it may have been the incriminating scrap of 1513 that made him think so hard about the rules by which conspirators must proceed: confide in absolutely no one except when absolutely necessary, try to leave no one alive who might be able to take revenge, and, above all, never put anything in writing.

Even military opportunities returned, when, in 1523, Giulio de' Medici succeeded to the papacy as Clement VII. During a time when the pressure of foreign claims was mounting, Machiavelli was entrusted with maintaining Florence's fortifications. He did his job enthusiastically—even ecstatically—and well. When, in the spring of 1527, the Emperor's armies thundered south through Italy, they bypassed the terrified city, judging the walls and forts too difficult to breach. Instead, the angry, starving, part-Spanish, part-Lutheran, barely controllable army marched directly on to Rome, where soldiers poured through the walls and viciously sacked the city—robbing, raping, murdering, and destroying for days on end. Machiavelli himself helped Clement to escape. But he had done even more for his beloved Florence than he knew, and less for himself. In the ensuing chaos, the Medici regime in Florence was overthrown; the republic was restored; the Great Council was reinstated. This was everything that Machiavelli had hoped for even when he appeared to be on the other side. He was seen not as brilliantly adaptable, however, but simply as on the other side. As a Medici supporter, he found himself once again unemployed, subject to the same sort of political suspicions as when the Medici had first returned. But, at fifty-eight, he no longer had the resources to start over. He developed mysterious stomach ailments and took to his bed, and within weeks of the republic's restoration Machiavelli died, attended by his loving children, his loyal friends, and a priest.

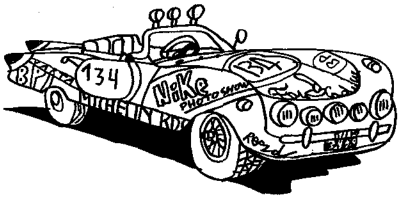
Odd, that an expert at winning should have lost so much, and then lost it all again. In however perverse a way, Machiavelli was no less a martyr to his convictions than Thomas More, who was beheaded—and eventually canonized—for his refusal to condone the royal power grab that Henry VIII purportedly learned from "The Prince." Of course, More had the courage to stand in opposition to the moral direction of his times. Machiavelli *was* his times: he gave permanent form and force to its political habits and unspoken principles. Although it is often said that modern politics begins with Machiavelli, most politicians still run and hide at the mention of his name. In 1972, Henry Kissinger, the most arguably "Machiavellian" counsellor of princes this country has ever seen, recoiled at the insinuation that he had learned anything from the Florentine Secretary, stating, "There is very little of Machiavelli's one can use in the contemporary world." (Kissinger's only competitor in this area, Karl Rove, is the subject of a new biography titled "Machiavelli's Shadow.") Yet we continue to flounder in the break between politics and ethics that Machiavelli made impossible to ignore: private life and public life; personal morality and Realpolitik. We insist that our leaders convince us that they are exemplary and (increasingly) God-fearing human beings, who are nevertheless able to protect us from enemies not so constrained. How is this to be done? Do we really want to know?

Most important, as we emerge from the century that gave Utopia a bad name—in which Hitler and Stalin and other genocidal princes believed they were building superior worlds, in which the means was annihilation and the end an illusion—we are still arguing bitterly over the question of whether the end justifies the means. Are there any acts that one's sense of honor (or conscience, or ability to sleep at night) forbid one to commit—as an individual, as a nation—no matter what the promised end? Machiavelli did not question the use of torture for political purposes, even after he had been its victim. "When the very safety of the country depends upon the resolution to be taken," he wrote in the "Discourses," "no considerations of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, not of glory or of infamy, should be allowed to prevail." This has doubtless been the tacit position of many governments throughout history; it is openly the position of a large segment of our government now, with Vice-President Cheney warning of the need for going to "the dark side" in dealing with terrorist suspects, and Attorney General Mukasey undecided about which methods of "enhanced" interrogation constitute torture. There is no question, however, about the method used on Machiavelli, the *strappado*—also known today as "Palestinian hanging"—which was responsible for the death of an Iraqi detainee in C.I.A. custody at Abu Ghraib in 2003: the prisoner was suspended by his arms, which had been shackled behind his back, and died of asphyxiation. Private morality may be presumed to prevail again when the country is strong and secure, although Machiavelli, unlike those who offer such consolation, admitted that the nature of mankind makes it unlikely that there ever will be such a time. "I love my country more than my own soul," Machiavelli wrote, yet a full assessment of his work makes that decision far from clear. Then, as now, it is a terrible choice. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

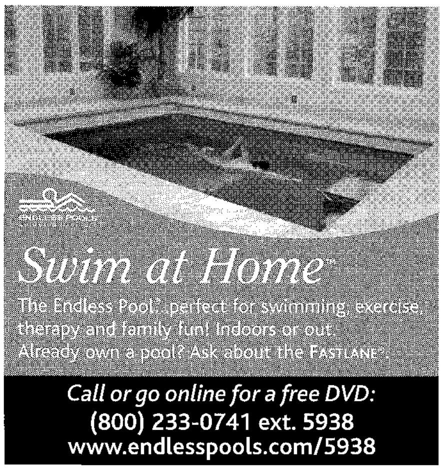
Man in the Dark, *by Paul Auster (Henry Holt; $23).* A car accident and the death of his wife have left the retired book critic August Brill a physical and spiritual invalid. Virtually confined to his house with his recently divorced daughter and a twenty-three-year-old grandchild stricken with grief after the murder of her ex-boyfriend, Brill, an insomniac, attempts to stave off thoughts of death by telling himself bedtime stories. His tired mind weaves a tale that combines details of his life with more fantastic flights—such as the story of a man who, waking up in an alternate universe where 9/11 never happened and the 2000 election led to civil war, is sent on a mission to destroy the very person who has imagined him into existence. The narrative juxtapositions and the riddling starkness of Auster's prose create an absorbing if mildly scattershot effect, breathing life into a meditation on the difference between the stories we want to tell and the stories we end up telling.

American Wife, *by Curtis Sittenfeld (Random House; $26).* In her third novel, Sittenfeld offers a thinly veiled account (Wisconsin, not Texas) of the life of Laura Bush, in the story of Alice Lindgren, who marries Charlie Blackwell, the ne'er-do-well son of a political dynasty who becomes President. The early chapters, in which Sittenfeld depicts an innocent childhood and adolescence disrupted by tragedy, are the most compelling. As the book progresses to more recent and familiar events, she has difficulty enlivening the ins and outs of electioneering and policymaking. The object of Sittenfeld's fascination is the seeming incongruity between Alice's liberal sympathies and her bookish intellect and Charlie's conservative nature and general insouciance. Neither character is very likable—Alice weak-willed and martyrlike, Charlie unbearably self-centered—but the novel, Sittenfeld's most fully realized yet, artfully evokes the painful reverberations of the past.



The Angel of Grozny, *by Åsne Seierstad, translated from the Norwegian by Nadia Chrijstensen (Basic; $25.95).* Seierstad, the author of "The Bookseller of Kabul," first visited Chechnya in 1995, shortly after Russian tanks rolled in. Twelve years later, as another war gave way to a dubious, corrupt peace, she returned, at one point hiding her blond hair and dying her eyebrows and lashes to sneak across the border. This is a chronicle of reciprocal destruction: Seierstad talks to Chechen rebels and to victims of Russian torture; to the mother of a terrorist and the mother of a maimed Russian soldier; to a family that lost four sons to the war and to street children who prove too damaged even for the "angel" of the title, who runs a home for war orphans. At times, Seierstad's persona is intrusive; when the Chechen President praises her looks, she tells us. But she is a humane witness to a dehumanizing conflict, and recent developments in the Caucasus make her testament all the more timely.

Mrs. Woolf and the Servants, *by Alison Light (Bloomsbury; $30).* This engrossing portrait of Virginia Woolf and the women who looked after her explores how modern ideas of class and gender crucial to Woolf's writing ran up against her lingering ties to a waning Victorian domestic order. Woolf frequently pondered the "servant question," but her concern for those she employed was tinged with distaste. "I am sick of the timid spiteful servant mind," she wrote of Nellie Boxall, her cook for eighteen years. Though Woolf professed a desire for a time when masters and servants might be "fellow beings," and argued in her work for space and autonomy for women, her life was one of dependence; she did not learn to cook until she was forty-seven. Light deftly "restores the servants to the story," arguing that Woolf's relationships with them were "as enduring, intimate and intense as any in her life."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POP MUSIC

RE-START

Laptops go live.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

Last December, a friend and I went to a release party for Mary J. Blige's "Growing Pains" album. Near huge screens showing Blige videos, a d.j. was playing records on two turntables. The d.j.'s eyes, however, were trained on an Apple MacBook on a shelf above them. As a succession of Blige songs faded from one into the next, the d.j. never changed the records. My friend asked, "Is there a new Mary medley I don't know about?"

The answer was no. The d.j., like many today, was using a program called Serato Scratch Live, which uses a turntable as a knob or a switch. Signals from a special Serato record being manipulated are fed into a box connected to a laptop. Serato translates the resulting signals, allowing the d.j. to cue and cross-fade digital audio files with the turntables. Why use a turntable at all? It's still an efficient, familiar interface that, for blending songs, works better than a mouse. It's also a visual indication that the d.j. is doing something with, and *to*, the music being heard.

A laptop, though, is different. It sits in plain view, but its connection to the sound we're hearing is both invisible and unknown. That d.j. using Serato could be executing a series of sophisticated, improvised blends and combinations. Or he could also easily unplug a cable, hit the space bar to cue a prerecorded mix, and then monkey about with the turntables as if possessed by the muse. The audience would never know, and, if a d.j. arranged the windows on his screen cleverly, not even a person standing next to him could guess where the sounds were coming from.

Acts I've seen using both laptops and traditional instruments onstage in the past year include Björk, Radiohead, and Erykah Badu. At a recent Radiohead show in Camden, New Jersey, the group used an Apple laptop to provide rhythm tracks for songs like "15 Step" and "Videotape." Used this way, the laptop functions as a powerful and flexible drum machine. For Björk's show, the laptop sometimes provided most of the music onstage; at other times, it blended into a roar that included ten female Icelandic horn players. Erykah Badu employed the laptop in a more idiosyncratic way. Sitting on a small table near the singer, the laptop became a boom box that Badu reached for when she wanted to play snippets of other people's songs during her own set.

One band that uses laptops is Battles, from Brooklyn, consisting of two guitar players, a bassist, and a drummer—the traditional rock lineup. And there is singing, of a sort. But those simple facts hardly begin to suggest what happens onstage. Battles appears with a battery of keyboards, effects, pedals, and two Apple laptops. The band's music is built around tricky guitar and bass leitmotifs that repeat and interlock in dizzying ways that taunt the very idea of time signatures. The improbably powerful drummer John Stanier sits at his yellow drum kit at the front of the stage, anchoring the songs with forceful drumbeats that are easier to follow than the web of sounds around him. But machines complicate the experience. Many times during a Battles show, a guitar or bass figure will begin to repeat. Someone will seem to be playing the figure, then suddenly stop and put his instrument down, though the figure will continue to play, looping. Before you can sort out what is reproducing the sound, the entire band starts in together and the particular motifs get lost in the fray. In the course of a Battles show, there are often many more sounds than there are musicians; with all the gadgets onstage, it took me four or five shows to figure out what was going on. (It is a testament to the band's energy that none of this matters when it comes to enjoying the music. A friend told me that Battles reminded him of Bo Diddley.) At first, I thought that the laptops might be tying the whole megillah together with preprogrammed sequences that the group could steer by. On the nights when I've seen the band members charging forward together like gears rolling over each other's teeth, I've found it hard to believe that the laptops were not providing some preprogrammed structure.

In August, I sat down with the group's two guitarists, Tyondai Braxton and Ian Williams, at the Roebling Tea Room, in Williamsburg. Braxton, the son of the jazz composer Anthony Braxton, shares his father's slightly unmanaged Afro, and is outgoing and open. Williams, who is as tall as Braxton—membership in Battles seems to be limited to people over six feet—is slightly skinnier and more reserved. Both confirmed that their laptops are simply sound banks. In the songs that use keyboards, the laptops provide stored noises, some of which sound like keyboards, others like enormous door buzzers. The guitar and bass loops, at the center of Battles's aesthetic, are created by digital pedals or rack-mounted modules. This technology has been around for more than twenty years, and is relatively primitive. It is also difficult to pull off, song after song. If a loop is played into the machines slightly off center, and doesn't line up fully with other loops, Stanier faces the devilish task of finding a beat that averages out the moiré effect of all the overlapping.

"Laptops are fine," Williams said, guardedly. "But everything we do is basically live. I get bummed when I see an act use a laptop as a backing track—you know, they walk offstage and the song is still playing."

An act that embodies many of the complications of the laptop's role is Girl Talk, the stage name of Gregg Gillis, who performs with nothing but a laptop onstage and uses only loops and samples from other people's songs, most of them well known. Girl Talk tracks combine Southern rap with Radiohead songs, Lil Wayne with the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and have proved popular both live and on the Internet. The live draw is perhaps not surprising. To flesh out the experience of watching a guy working on a computer, Gillis leaps about, invites fans to dance onstage, and often ends shows wearing just his boxers. To protect his Panasonic Toughbook, Gillis covers it in Saran Wrap and uses a mouse rather than the track pad. ("My hands just get too sweaty," he explained to me.)

In July, over lunch in a lower Manhattan restaurant, Gillis showed me how he constructs his elaborate mashups, which usually linger for no more than a minute on each loop before moving on. (There are more than three hundred different songs sampled on the latest Girl Talk album, "Feed the Animals.") He uses a cheap P.C. software package called AudioMulch, which enables users to import audio, create loops, and then stack them in a very simple interface. While we were talking, Gillis grabbed part of a Tupac Shakur song, looping both a vocal snippet and part of the drumbeat. (The software is able to lock all these loops into one time signature.)

Gillis brought up a series of windows on his screen, each representing a collection of loops that could be played in any order. To perform a live set, Gillis has to turn a new loop on and off every few seconds, or choose to let several go on longer if he feels like getting up and dancing. The software is not set up to execute a long, complicated series of decisions on his behalf. He has to re-create the mix every night.

Several decades ago, Gillis might have been playing at clubs like Danceteria or the World, where the d.j. booth was not necessarily visible from the dance floor and the space had no obvious front or back. The music floated above and around the dancers, who were both witnesses and performers. But, as dance clubs have dwindled in number, acts like Girl Talk are generally playing rock clubs that have traditional stages, and this demands some kind of visual. Gillis is happy to comply, and his open-ended act and communal free-for-all certainly constitutes a live performance. It is ironic, then, that Gillis is so hands on in executing his mixes. If there was ever somebody who could simply hit "Play" and bounce around, it is Gillis. With some version of the Girl Talk mashup coming from the speakers and Gillis jumping out of his pants, most concertgoers would feel as though they had got what they paid for. There is no longer any way of telling whether or not the Wizard is behind the curtain. Does it matter? ♦

To protect his Panasonic Toughbook, Gregg Gillis covers it in Saran Wrap.

PHILIP BURKE

THE CURRENT CINEMA

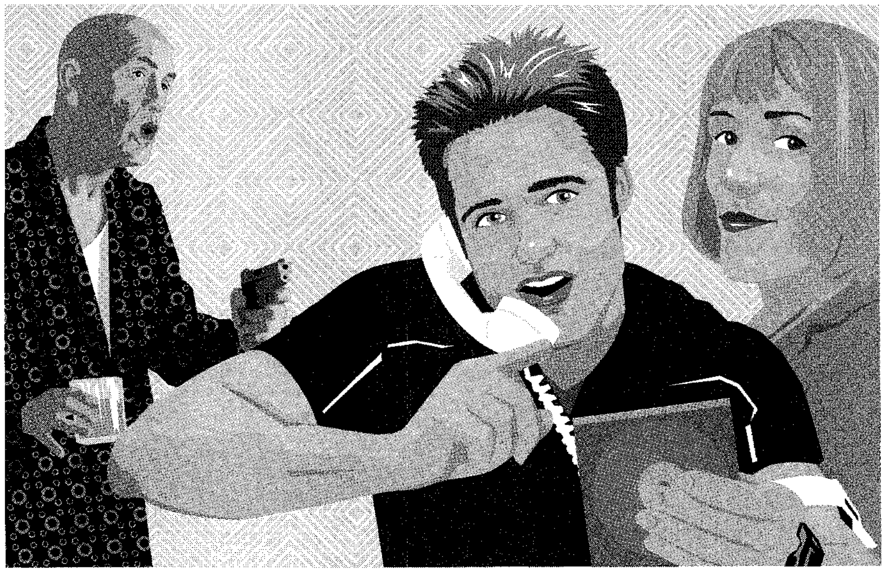
STORM WARNINGS

"Burn After Reading" and "Trouble the Water."

BY DAVID DENBY

The new Coen brothers picture, "Burn After Reading," is a very black comedy set in a blanched, austere-looking Washington, D.C.—an uninspiring and uncomfortable place in which everyone betrays everyone else, and the emotional tone veers from icy politeness to spitting rage and back again. "Burn After Reading" has plenty of momentum—short, tight-knit scenes of people arguing, driving, screwing, fighting—and, if you listen hard, you may hear echoes of a portentous old Capitol Hill drama like "Advise and Consent." But those echoes are stifled by a farce plot so bleak and unfunny that it freezes your responses after about forty-five minutes. The characters—Washington types, in and out of government—are all egotists who think they know how the world works yet miss the most obvious signals. They throw themselves into adultery but get little pleasure out of it, not even the excitement of betrayal. The one person who falls truly in love gets nowhere. The Coens dramatize their point of view in a brief scene in which John Malkovich's Osborne Cox, an irascible, Princeton-educated C.I.A. analyst who has been canned for drinking, unburdens himself to his father. The two are sitting on Osborne's yacht. The father, however, has had a stroke and can't respond. No one in the movie responds to anyone else.

The Coens have often worked out their private sense of amusement and disdain onscreen: in the baffling gangster jargon and reversals of loyalty in "Miller's Crossing"; in the bizarrely punitive disasters that beset the left-wing-prig screenwriter in "Barton Fink"; in the openmouthed idiocies of the three escaped cons in "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" In those movies, one could detect the brothers laughing at a world of fools who never understand what's happening to them and mess everything up. But it's hard to sense much laughter behind "Burn After Reading." Even Frances McDormand, the salt-of-the-earth actress who has warmed so many of the Coen brothers movies, falls into a queasy dead zone. Her Linda Litzke, an administrator at the Hardbodies gym, provides a plot motor of sorts. Browsing Internet dating services, Linda thinks she needs extensive "work" on her face and arms and tummy, so that she can meet better guys. She's as obsessed with redemption through surgery as Holly Hunter was obsessed with redemption through a baby—anybody's baby—in the Coen brothers' "Raising Arizona." Hunter's peppery little wife was married to a complaisant dope, played by Nicolas Cage, who aided her in her schemes, and McDormand's Linda has a comparable helpmate: a gym bunny named Chad Feldheimer, played by Brad Pitt, in shorts, crew socks, and a high-dork pompadour. Chad is a pre-sexual child constantly sucking on a water bottle, a useless guy, and he and Linda, trying to raise money for the surgery, blunder into the lives of the other characters in ways that suggest a nasty providence at work. It happens that Malkovich's character, seeking his own redemption, has begun writing a tell-all memoir. His wife, a cold-eyed doctor (Tilda Swinton) who's having an affair with a highly available U.S. marshall (George Clooney), wants a divorce, and steals Osborne's backup computer disk, which has their marital finances on it as well as his memoir. The disk then falls by accident into Linda and Chad's hands at the gym. They think that they possess secret information of great value, and their stumbling efforts to get a reward out of Osborne turn into an inadvertent blackmail attempt and worse.



John Malkovich, Brad Pitt, and Frances McDormand in the Coen brothers' movie.

QUICKHONEY

Racing around Washington, Linda and Chad have their crazy quest. In the movies, crazy quests are usually blessed with the most tender love, since feckless dreamers seem more alive onscreen than ordinary folk. But these two are not adorably sweet dumb clucks, like the couple in "Arizona"; on the contrary, they're both so pigheaded that you couldn't root for them even if they were doing something fun, like breaking into the Bank of England. McDormand, playing a monomaniac, her jaw thrust out, has an impervious, even brute quality—you think that Linda is more likely to get her face rearranged by smacking into a wall than by surgery. And Brad Pitt kills the laughs by overdoing a happy-chump routine, snapping his fingers and swinging his shoulders, signalling to us, in the long tradition of mediocre actors, that we shouldn't confuse him with the character he's playing.

This is not a comedy sparked by bright, funny lines. The only thing meant to be funny is the malign pattern of the movie, in which the coincidences and mistakes become more and more grotesquely violent—innocent people die, the guilty vanish. In general, the Coens dispose of the characters with the same careless speed that they used to dispose of Josh Brolin near the end of "No Country for Old Men." These people don't mean much to them; it's hardly a surprise that they don't mean much to us, either. As a piece of craft, the movie is fitted together like a precision instrument, but the best one can say for "Burn After Reading" is that some of the high-powered performers know how to refine the Coens' satirical impulses into high caricature. John Malkovich, wearing monochromatic suits and prissy bow ties, gives full range to his talent for haughty malevolence. Osborne can't get into a conversation with anyone without blowing his top, and Malkovich's scenes of slowly mounting ire, complete with baroque insults and fervent profanity, move through time like a series of slow-motion Olympic dives. You hold your breath, waiting to see how many twists he'll put into each episode. George Clooney, bearded, and with the quick, reflexive smile of a car salesman, is charming as a cut-rate Lothario, a man who would sleep with a butterfly. A woman has only to look at him, and he's ready; his virtue is that, utterly faithless, he nevertheless wants to give pleasure. At the same time, he's a neurotic plagued by obscure fears and little tics. He isn't remotely plausible as a lover for Tilda Swinton's doctor, a steely hardnose who would never tolerate such a loser, no matter how good-looking. Even black comedy requires that the filmmakers love *someone*, and the mock cruelties in "Burn After Reading" come off as a case of terminal misanthropy.

There was plenty of water sloshing around New Orleans last week, though not nearly so much as in August of 2005, when a onetime drug dealer and aspiring rapper named Kimberly Roberts, possessed of a new digital video camera, decided to stay in her house with her husband, Scott Roberts, during the Katrina deluge and take pictures. Just before the storm hit, Kimberly, a large, handsome African-American woman of twenty-four with a brassy voice and the presence of a lioness, tracked around her neighborhood, in the Ninth Ward, checking up on her alcoholic uncle and other local figures who had remained behind. When the rains came, she retreated to the attic of her house with Scott and an elderly neighbor, and kept her camera rolling. The soundtrack is like the roar of an express train racing through a tunnel; the footage, while chaotic, is a terrifyingly expressive struggle to record what's going on without dying. The camera flies wildly from one hand to the next, with glimpses out the window as the water rises to the second floor of the house—on the street, we can see a stop sign at the top of a long pole, and it's nearly submerged. This footage, which is at the heart of the documentary "Trouble the Water," is moviemaking at its most primal and existential: I shoot; therefore I am.

When the storm subsided, Kimberly and Scott left town and sheltered in a Red Cross center in Alexandria, Louisiana, where they met the filmmaking team of Carl Deal and Tia Lessin. In mid-September, Deal and Lessin recorded Kimberly's return to the mud-carpeted, wrecked neighborhood, where she learned that some of the people she had interviewed had since died. And then the filmmakers kept shooting, recording tales of survival and disaster. The survivors say that they no longer feel like citizens, that they will never trust the federal or the state government again; a Tennessee woman says that she will not let her son enlist in the Army and defend a country that abandoned poor African-Americans. The people get on with their lives, but the film doesn't move in strict chronological order: Kimberly's footage of the storm, like a nightmare, returns again and again, and the general effect is to reveal more of her temperament and skill as she emerges from the hurricane a heroine. In the end, "trampling over tribulations," as she puts it, she performs a rap song that tells of her earlier life—a kind of "Song of Myself" that feels fully justified as an anthem of endurance. Kimberly is a great story-teller. "Trouble the Water," along with Spike Lee's extraordinary four-hour epic, "When the Levees Broke" (available on DVD), remains one of the most eloquent records we have of a tragedy that brought out some of the most impressively alive men and women in New Orleans. ♦

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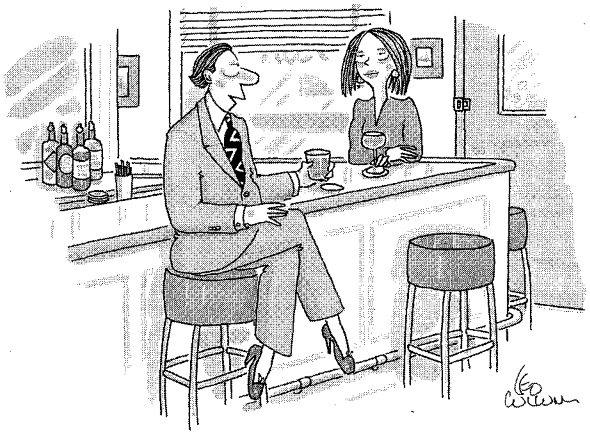
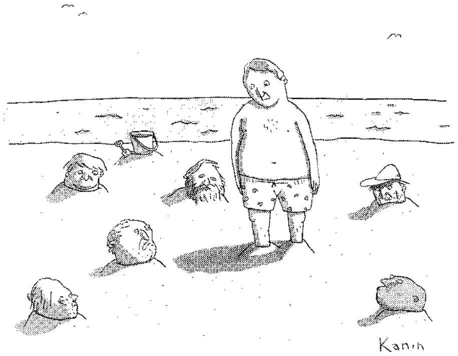
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Tom Cheney, must be received by Sunday, September 14th. Finalists in the September 1st contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the September 29th issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"Actually, I'm not crazy about long walks on the beach."
Naji Chammas, Del Mar, Calif.



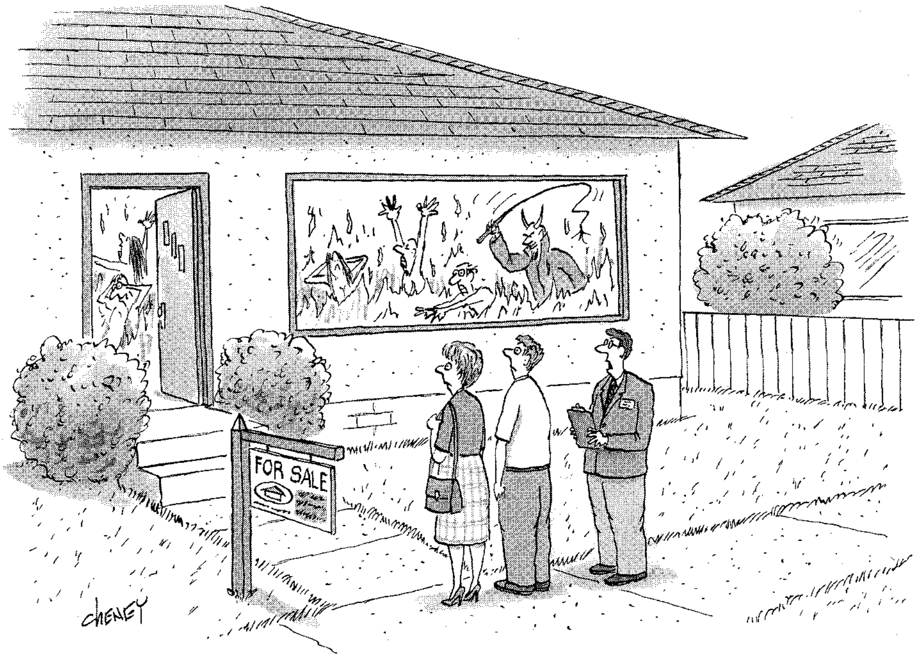
THE FINALISTS

"Run! The kid with the little red shovel is coming back!"
Timothy Gunn, New York City

"We save a bundle on suntan lotion."
Pedro Diaz, Nyack, N.Y.

"You got that? Three bottled waters, two sodas, one coffee, and six straws."
Robin McCauley, Newport News, Va.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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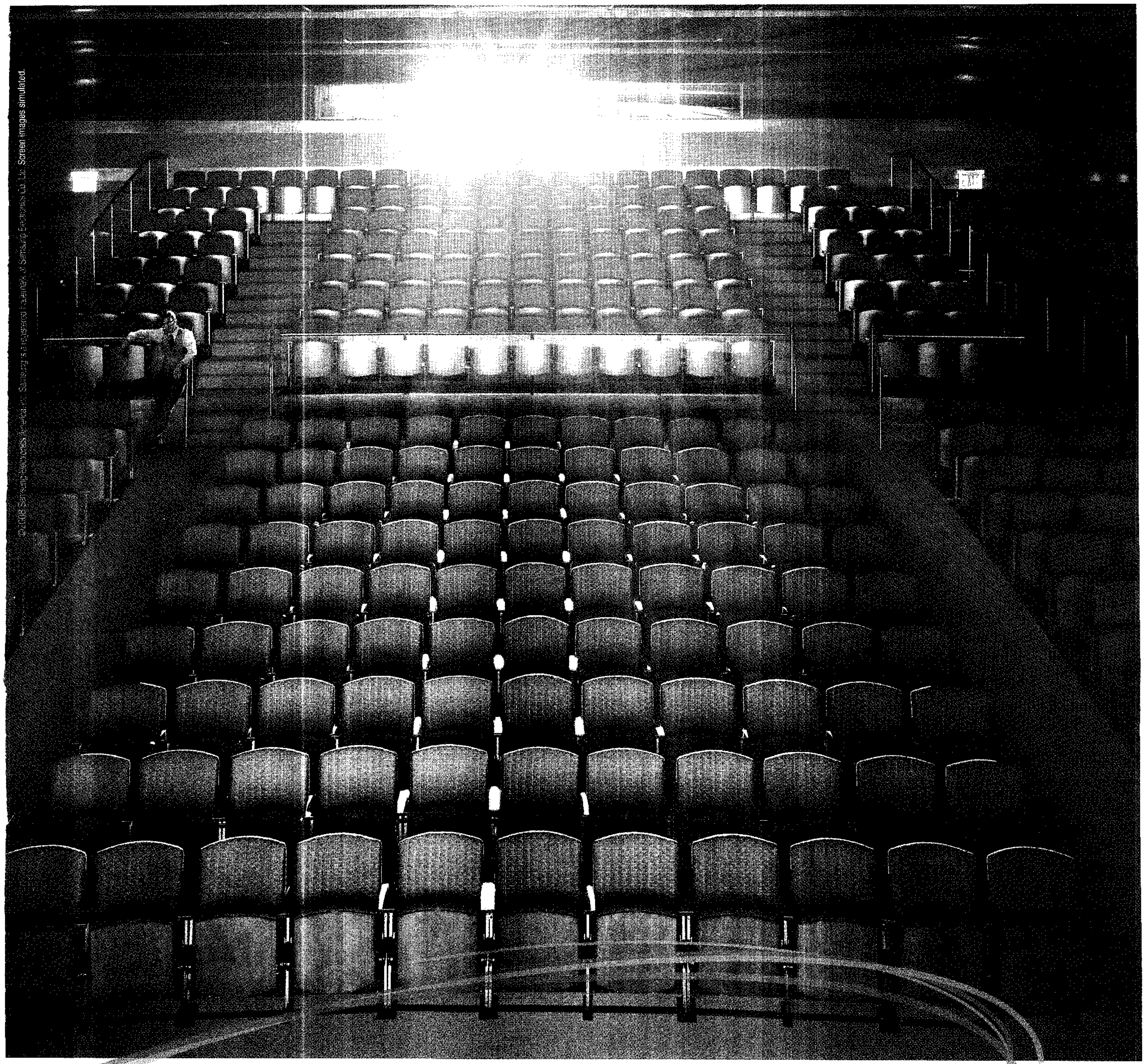

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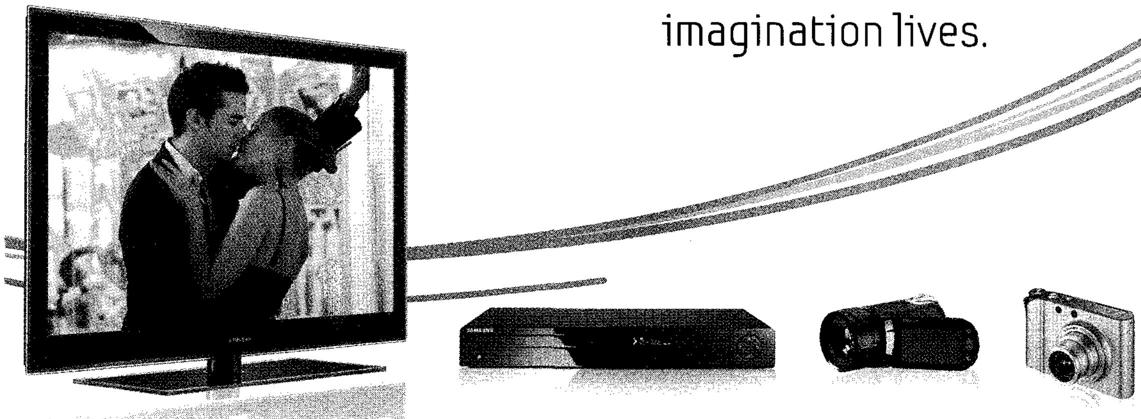
When home movies are suddenly worth staying home for,
imagination lives.



Whether you're watching Hollywood blockbusters or reliving your family's memories, Samsung's HDTVs, Blu-ray players, HD camcorders and HD still cameras turn your living room into the ultimate viewing environment.

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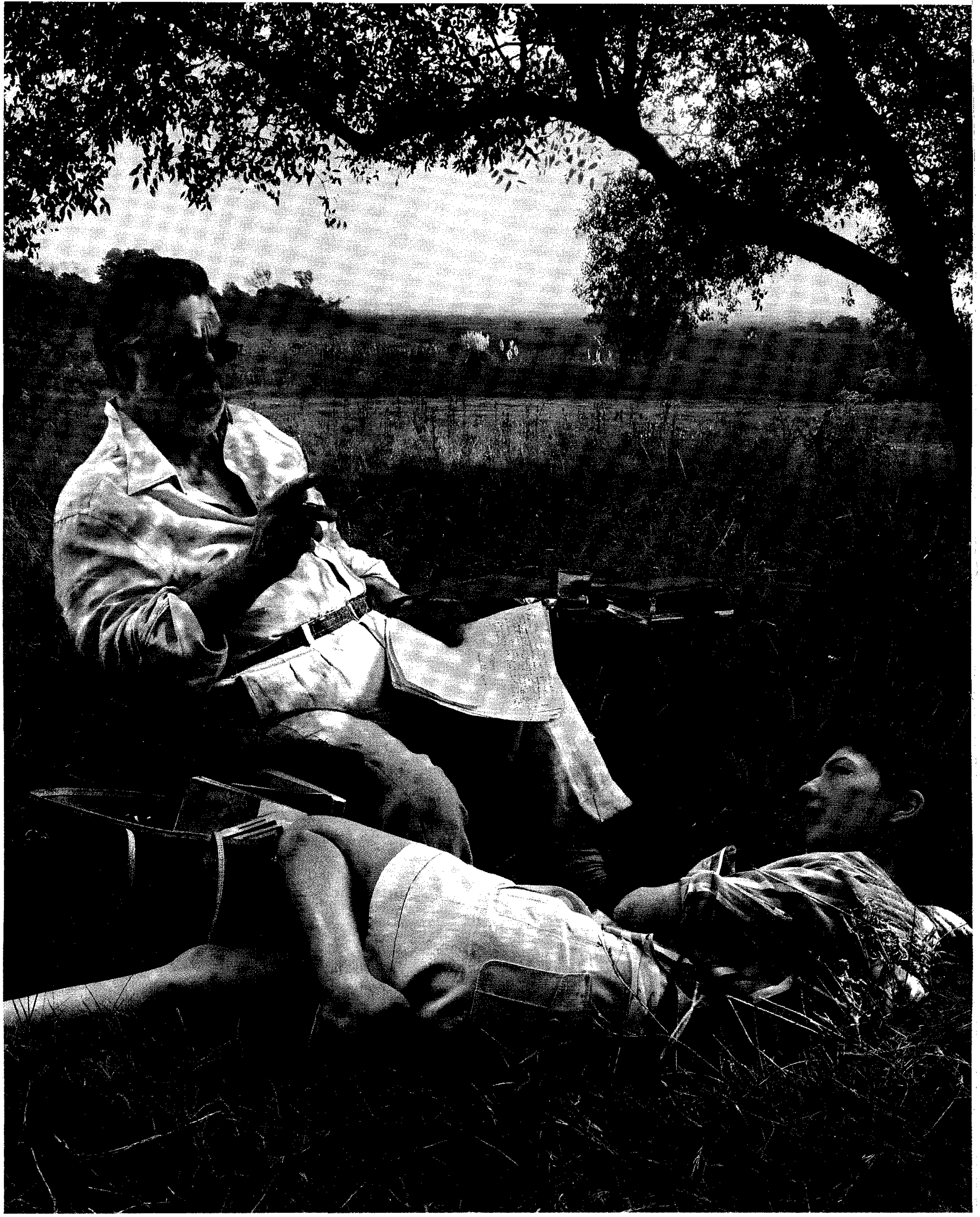

Inside every story, there is a beautiful journey.
Early evening, Buenos Aires. Argentina.

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